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Hitler Has Lost the War

Hitler has lost the war, and for this the Russians deserve the major share of the credit. All over the world, people were saying these two things during the past seven days. Hitler probably is not dead, as former Ambassador Davies and others suggested last week, but possibly he wishes he were. As Max Werner points out in this issue, it was the military incompetence of der Führer himself that caused his great armies to be trapped before Stalingrad and in the Caucasus.

While final victory for the United Nations now seems inevitable, this should not cause a moment's relaxation of our efforts. It is up to us to say whether the final defeat of Germany, Japan and their allies will be consummated in the next year or two or will take a far longer period. The U-boat menace in the Atlantic is deadly serious. In Africa, we have hardly got started in a military sense, though politically we have done much that we will live to regret. Australia still fears an early invasion by Japan and the situation in China is extremely serious from the military, economic and political points of view.

Why Not a War Cabinet?

High on the list of things to do comes the urgent necessity of centralizing and coördinating our own war effort. The story of Jeffers v. the army and navy is a good example of how not to run a war. Out of very limited supplies, we could build plants and make rubber or we could turn out escort vessels, tanks, planes and high-octane gasoline. The dispute was fought out in the newspapers, before congressional committees, in the offices of the WPB and almost everywhere else, and was finally ended in customary compromise. Over and over, we have gone through this same wasteful and dangerous routine. Almost nothing is ever remedied until it becomes a huge public scandal; then the President steps in and acts as referee, or appoints one.

Politically, of course, a war cabinet presents great difficulties. The Republicans would demand a mathematical share of the total membership; so would the Democrats, whereas in fact the cabinet should consist of the best men available, irrespective of party. There are rumors today in Washington of what is called a super-cabinet of three or four men, such as Hopkins, Nelson and Baruch; but this would be a group of assistant presidents, open to many of the same objections as the present system. The war cabinet ought to include the President and the eight or ten most important other individuals directing all phases of the war. Disputes over supplies or manpower or any other war problem should be discussed around the table and continuously, and should be settled in the light of the best judgment of all concerned, instead of being treated like a piece of litigation, with two lawyers going before a judge. It is outrageous that in the middle of the war we should still try to run our economy as an inexperienced driver operates a car, by fits and starts, first stepping on the gas too hard and then not hard enough.

Army v. Civilians

If a war cabinet is created, it should have a heavy majority of civilians in its membership. The struggle between the army and civilians for control of the war

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effort still goes on, despite reports that it had been settled; and it is by no means sure, as most people thought, that the White House is on the side of the civilians. It is quite true that there are individual military men who are better than individual civilians; some of the latter are cursed with "business-as-usual"; the military men are ruthless in their desire to win the war. Nevertheless it seems clear to us that final authority should be in civilian hands for reasons that are simple but impressive. This is a civilian country. The military men have not the training, experience or personality to conduct the affairs of the whole nation. Their past attempts to do so have sometimes been of a character that would have been disastrous if permitted to go through. The actual fighting is a big enough job for the generals.

A bill to ensure civilian control of war production has been proposed in the Senate by Senators Pepper and Kilgore, and the upper chamber divided on deciding to what committee it should be referred. The pro-army group won, and the bill was sent to the Military Affairs Committee, where it will doubtless be smothered. Some of President Roosevelt's most important advisers lined up in favor of the army in the dispute. On the other side of the ledger score the fact that Donald Nelson, chairman of the WPB, has taken important operations away from Deputy Director Ferdinand Eberstadt, who is pro-army, and given them to Charles E. Wilson, who is not. For the sake of the war and the post-war period, Americans should insist that the army stick to its job, which is to meet and overcome the enemy.

Labor's Good Record

The labor-baiters who are going around attacking American workers for lying down on the job ought to take a look at the figures released a few days ago by the War Labor Board. In war industries last year strikes caused a loss of just six days in every 10,000. The number was reduced 75 percent from pre-war times, although everyone knows that as a rule strikes increase enormously when there is a severe shortage of workers. British labor is forever being held up as a model for the United States; yet in proportion to population, we had almost exactly the same loss of time through strikes as did Great Britain, which is now in the fourth year of her war and subject to all the incentives of having experienced heavy bombing, and knowing the enemy is only a few miles away.

Rickenbacker for President?

The foregoing facts ought to be pondered by Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker in his present campaign around the country which many people believe is preliminary to an attempt to get into politics; indeed, a presidential boom is being talked about by some people who don't realize how hard it is to capture the organization of one of the political parties. Eddie Rickenbacker is a likable man, a good aviator, but he understands almost as little of statesmanship as does ex-Colonel Lindbergh. He is perfectly right when he says that absenteeism in factories is bad and that racketeering by labor leaders ought to be abolished; but he gives an impression —despite his denials—that he would go much farther than this if he had his way, and would deprive the workers of legitimate and hard-won rights. You can't get maximum production out of coerced and unhappy men and women, any more than you can have a stable and enduring democracy on such a basis.

The worst weaknesses of our war effort are not among the men and women on the production lines, against whom Captain Rickenbacker fulminates; they are at the top, among the people of his own class. Bad planning, which produces too many weapons and too few ships, or too many cargo vessels in proportion to escort craft; slacking by management; misuse of scarce materials; sabotaging the war effort in order to gain a competitive advantage when peace comes—these are ten times more important than all the harm that has been done by activities of the workers.

Building Ships for What?

One reason why the battle with the submarine is going badly is bluntly stated in a well substantiated dispatch to Allied Labor News from London. British shipowners are building vessels that are easy prey for the subs because they are thinking not of winning the war but of making money after the war is over. They are building big, slow craft, standing high out of the water, equipped with all the machinery and devices of peacetime. Such vessels are an easy mark for the U-boats. But the shipowners are not disturbed by this fact; the government and the insurance companies pay for their losses. The same charge of peacetime instead of wartime design has been made in regard to American ships, and only the other day it was announced that henceforth new models would be used which have somewhat greater speed. It seems that we are still a long way from total war.

Hands Off, Senator

Everybody knows that the TVA is one of the finest things—perhaps the very finest—done in America in recent years. Nearly everybody likes it; but among the exceptions, we are sorry to say, is Sen. Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee. The seventy-four-year-old Senator doubtless feels that there were no such things as the TVA when he was young, and he doesn't want to see them now. At every session of Congress he reintroduces his plan to cripple the TVA. One of his ideas is that it should possess no operating capital—like every other repectable utility, public or private—but should put all its money into the Treasury and then struggle to get back what it needs. His other happy thought is

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that all TVA condemnation proceedings should go through individual jury trials: first, Neighbor Jones would sit on the jury and rob the TVA for Neighbor Smith, and then vice versa. All this is cruel nonsense in the middle of a war to which the TVA is making a magnificent and absolutely essential contribution. Write your Senator now and tell him you want Senator McKellar's covetous hands kept off the TVA.

American Labor in World Affairs

If American foreign policy, as made by the State Department, has sometimes seemed to betray the basic democracy of the American people, one reason has surely been the insularity of the American labor movement. Neither the AFL nor the CIO has taken the interest in international affairs which the British trade unions have displayed, and, with a few honorable exceptions, American unions have never conducted the educational work among their members which British unions have long carried on. The result has been ignorance and indifference.

That is why the creation of the American Labor Conference on International Affairs is important. The new organization combines representatives of the AFL, the CIO and the Railroad Brotherhoods. It is to study the problems of the conduct of the war and the future peace from labor's point of view, conduct a campaign of education on international affairs among organized labor and make labor's voice heard in the determination of policy. We hail this forward-looking move and wish the new organization success.

Gardens Become Real

There is no use dissembling the fact that this country will be very short of food this year. No one will starve, but there won't be very much to spare. In this situation the Department of Agriculture has reversed its policy of a year ago, and is urging everyone who can do so, to plant a Victory Garden to supply food at least to his own table. The government warns that making a garden is harder than it looks, and urges that you undertake one only with full determination to carry it through. A lot of people will now discover to their surprise that vegetables really grow in the dirt before they are picked and sold. They will also learn that growing them successfully is an art which requires as much application as many a lucrative job. Nature can be bountiful, but only when an unremitting warfare is waged against her fifth-columnists, such as soil exhaustion, too little water or too much, weeds, rabbits, woodchucks, insects and plant diseases. Success will be crowned with the most amazing discovery of all: that one who has never eaten within the hour of picking the better varieties that are seldom grown for market—young green beans, or an ear of sweet corn in its prime, or a strictly sun-ripened tomato—has never before really tasted a vegetable, or obtained its full food value either.

The Enemy of Abundance

Thurman Arnold is right in pointing out that we shall not succeed in our post-war aim of providing security and raising levels of living unless we learn how to control international cartels and monopolistic practices at home. Much emphasis has recently been laid on governmental fiscal policies as a stimulus to expanding production, and rightly so. But all the stimulus that can be supplied by public agencies will go for naught if private enterprise continues its pre-war tendency to restrict output in the interest of scarcity profits. The list of basic materials controlled by international monopolies is long and impressive, and though few complete monopolies exist on the national scale, big business does exercise enough control over prices and output, as well as over the use of new devices and better methods, so that competition does not do its work as conceived by the classical economists.

What has hampered the formulation of a good program to deal with this handicap to our economy is lack of any substantial agreement, even among experts, as to a feasible remedy. Many theoreticians still believe in the efficacy of competition, but years of attempts to enforce it, including Mr. Arnold's own campaign, have not yielded encouraging results. Other economists have hopes of converting business management to the benefits of a low-price policy, once the economic environment is made favorable by some governmental assurance of full employment. But big-business men, by and large, do not seem to be apt pupils in the school of enlightened self-interest. Governmental regulation is advocated by some, but it has been none too successful

"Can you lend me a cup of Thermite—I just need a little to finish up a batch of incendiaries!"

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and raises fears of bureaucracy. Finally, there is the drastic step of public ownership—but for this the American public does not seem ready, except in isolated cases. This, we predict, will be the big problem of the future.

Compensations of War

Though we have no liking for war, it does stimulate many advances which might not otherwise occur so rapidly. It would be an interesting job for somebody to compile a list of these offsets. One, of course, is the demonstration of the enormous amount we can produce if we set our minds to it. Another is the possibility of better distribution of the product. Still a third is the technical advances which can be achieved when they are sought, under pressure, by coöperation in the public interest rather than for private gain. Industrial spokesmen are continually titillating our imaginations by prediction of the marvels to be released for civilian use when peace comes. Not the least of the gains is the advance in popular knowledge of important scientific discoveries—for instance, those in nutrition. Facing food shortages, we are learning more about well balanced diets, vitamins, essential minerals and hitherto disregarded sources of vigor. And many war gardeners are finding out something about soil chemistry and plant biology. Even meteorology is coming into its own with the disappearance of official weather forecasts; we are reading magazine articles and books about cyclones and anti-cyclones, air masses, cold fronts and warm fronts, and are learning to make amateur predictions by observation of the clouds, the thermometer and the barometer.

The real advantage of all this is not that we gain materially by it, but that we come, as individuals, into closer touch with reality; we are more active participants in a world which had become excessively automatized and determined for us by outside forces. But it must be remembered that in this country we have suffered almost none of the real devastations of war. We have felt merely the stimulus of girding our loins for a gigantic common task. If we can learn finally that it would be well to exert the same effort for constructive ends in peace, we shall have gained the largest benefit of all.

Take-It-and-Run in Alaska

Since gold-rush days "take-it-and-run" has been the economic principle in Alaska. Steamship, mining and cannery interests located in the States control the economic life of the Territory, pay very small taxes (or none) and carry all profits outside. As a result of this prospector economy and tax system, living costs are approximately twice as high in the Territory as in the States, educational and community facilities are primitive and people who want to stay there and make homes find it impossible to do so. More than a year ago Gov. Ernest Gruening proposed to the legislature a revision of the tax structure, recommending a personal and corporate income tax, a "severance" tax on gold and a general property tax, all related to capacity to pay and to the Territory's economic needs.

No one disputed the soundness of these proposals and almost all Alaskans supported them. The absentee interests, through their well paid lobbies, defeated them, however. As the war has made clear, it is time that we used Alaska and ceased merely to mine it, literally and figuratively. Alaskans and Governor Gruening are continuing their fight for a tax system suitable for the needs of people who make a living in Alaska rather than on it, and their effort deserves support.

The Battle of the Russian Railroads

One way to understand the news from Russia is to remember that railroads, rather than snow-covered highways or frozen rivers, are the key to the winter campaign. Today, as Max Werner points out in this issue, the Russians are winning the battle of the railroads. The Donets Basin, where they are now fighting, is the only part of the Soviet Union that has almost as many railroads as an average Mid-Western state. When the Russians retreated from the Basin last summer, they lost not only mines and heavy industries but also their remaining trunk lines to the south. The only link with their armies below Stalingrad was a jerkwater line running east of the Volga. That was why the first heavy counter blow at the Germans was struck northwest of Stalingrad, where supplies could be assembled by rail.

Since November the Great Russian offensive had moved southwest and westward along the railroads the Germans had seized. Many of their victories have been won at railroad junctions, where they cut the communications between German armies. One by one they have cleared the lines through Stalingrad, the one running from the north to Rostov, the two lines from central Russia into the Donets Basin; and at several points they have crossed the trunk line leading from Rostov through Kharkov to the Crimea. West of Kharkov, the railroads on which the Germans must depend are much farther apart. The result is that the strategic position of the two sides has been completely reversed. Three months ago, it looked as if the Russian armies north and south of Stalingrad might have to fight two separate wars. Today it is the German armies that are fighting separately, with roundabout lines of communication, whereas the Russians are making a unified and masterly advance.

Don't Give Them Back to the Army

We can see no justification for the bill now under consideration in Washington which would return the Japanese relocation centers to the army. It is true that there has been trouble in some of these camps, but there is no reason to believe that there has been more

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than was normally to be expected or that the trouble would have been less if the camps had been continuously under the army (which admittedly did a good job, however, in first rounding up the Japanese and moving them out of the area considered dangerous). The trouble in the camps has come from two chief causes: dissension stirred up by Japanese agents, official or unofficial; and conflict with neighboring American communities, especially in the South, where many people are not accustomed to seeing a member of any colored race stand up for his rights, as the Japanese Americans have done.

The present general policy is to separate the loyal from the disloyal elements in the camps, and to make every effort to remove loyal Americans from the camps and get them jobs. The fact that the army is now recruiting a Japanese American battalion should reassure timid prospective employers. We understand that a congressional committee will tour the camps and investigate the situation before taking up the Wallgren-Holman bill to give the job back to the army. We are confident that such an investigation will confirm the wisdom of the policy outlined above.

A Correction

A slip in editing caused a misstatement to appear in our editorial, "The Militant and Free Speech," in our issue of February 8. The sentence in question should have read:

> We agree with little that The Militant has printed—indeed, we deeply regret and deplore its seeing in the war only a conflict between rival groups of imperialist nations.

Hitler's Appeasement Offensive

WHILE GUNS ARE ROARING and planes are dropping their bomb loads, the war has taken a new turn which, if we are unwary, might lose us the victory the guns and planes are winning. Desperate under the immense blows of the Russian army, the Nazis are making an all-out bid for a negotiated peace with Britain and America. They are doing so over the heads of President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill. They have scant chance of success, but the danger of their attempt must not be minimized.

The speeches broadcast on the tenth anniversary of Nazi power show that gloom has come over the Nazi leaders. They have reason for gloom. Their armies are bleeding to death in Russia, and the vaulting expectations they once had of a world imperium are now reduced to a desperate and earth-creeping search for means of survival.

But the Nazis are shrewd enough propagandists to turn even disaster to their uses, provided we are gullible enough to be taken in. They are not underestimating their losses in Russia. They are not hiding their gloom. In fact, they are flaunting it. And, as usual, there is method in their madness. They hope to frighten us with the spectre of a world which, by their defeat, will be abandoned to the ravishment of all the forces that the Western ruling groups fear.

First of all, they count on the Asiatic bogey. Hitler and Goebbels and Goering depict the Russian armies as "Asiatic hordes," the Russians as the "Huns," and themselves as the protectors of European civilization against Asiatic conquest. Just how well the Japanese allies of the Nazis will like this new propaganda line is not clear, although there have been signs (perhaps deliberately planted) that relations between the two allies are not extraordinarily friendly anyway. Hitler and Goebbels have doubtless been impressed by the fact that feeling among Americans is much stronger against the Japanese than against the Germans. And they doubtless remember also that Charles A. Lindbergh's view that the abiding war was the war between "Western civilization" and the "Oriental hordes" once attained wide currency.

But the chief energies of the Nazis are directed toward depicting the menace to the West as coming not from the Orient but from Bolshevism. This is an old chestnut, warmed over by the Nazis so many times that it should by now be charred to cinders. But they are trying it again. They weep bitter tears over the radio at the spectacle of Britain being overrun by the Bolsheviks. They depict the Russians as brutal beasts, who slaughter their own men. They invoke fantastic visions of the capitalists and lower middle classes of Europe being liquidated by the victorious Communists. They depict themselves and their Central European allies as a bastion provided by God against the assault of Bolshevism.

This should be obvious hogwash to any American or Englishman with a grain of sense, an inkling of Nazi propaganda devices, and even the minimal capacity to learn from history or experience. The answer that Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill gave to this new peace offensive was harsh, direct and unequivocal. In this context the "unconditional surrender" aspect of the Casablanca conference will prove to be its most meaningful. And in the same context the exchange of personal messages last week between Roosevelt and Stalin, on the occasion of the surrender of the last Nazi troops at Stalingrad, was of the first importance as an explicit reassurance to the Russians that America does not intend to sell them out on the verge of victory.

That is why Hitler and the Nazi propaganda lords are now going over the heads of the democratic leaders. That is why they are appealing in England to a ludicrous perversion of the old-school-tie argument. "You can come to an agreement with a gentleman, but with a Bolshevik you cannot conclude an agreement." (If that is so, Hermann, we don't want to be considered gentlemen.) That is why they are playing up on the radio the

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achievements of Dies and Cox and the whole reactionary group in Congress that is seeking to dramatize the war as one between capitalism and communism at home. That is why they are playing on the deeply rooted fears that British and American industrialists have long had of socialization and control of big industry. That is why they are pushing Hitler himself into the background, and hauling out and furbishing up again the Goerings and Schachts whom they have in the past used as decoys for Western conservative feeling. And that is why they are trying to frighten the Western generals into thinking that if they allow the Russians to destroy the Nazi armies wholly, the Russians will be in Berlin before they have a chance to occupy any of the European continent.

But even conservative opinion in Britain and America should by now recognize this technique for what it is: an attempt at the crisis moment to split Britain and America from their Russian ally. The industrialists, the parliamentarians, the newspaper editors, the generals should know that only the Russian armies have put us within reach of victory, and only the Russian armies can help us clinch that victory. And they should know finally that everything Stalin has said and done indicates clearly that he has no intention of Bolshevizing Europe and attaching it as an appendage to Russia. The Russian state is no longer aiming at a Bolshevist world revolution, as it did in the days of Lenin and Trotsky. It is aiming only at a genuine security within its boundaries that it had at the beginning of the Nazi invasion.

The only revolutionary movement in the world that we must really reckon with is the unfulfilled social revolution that is in process all over the world. Because the democracies did not fulfill it in the period between the two world wars, the Nazis were enabled to make the attempt to fulfill it in their own hideous way. If we allow ourselves to be split from Russia, we shall again lay ourselves open to another attempt at Nazi world power and another world war. If we continue to strengthen our ties with Russia, we can build a system of world security within which every nation and region will be able to fulfill the revolution in its own way. And our way, and Europe's as well, must be the democratic way.

What the Nazis are now engaged in is not just a new peace offensive. It is rather an appeasement offensive. In the early stages of the Nazi war against humanity the great danger was that the democracies would appease Germany, as indeed they did. The danger now is that they will allow the Germans to appease them. In both cases the danger has come not from the people but from the ruling economic and military groups. It is a sad commentary on our earlier record in this respect, and on the image of our moral sense which we have presented to the Nazis, that they should even dare to hope that they will be successful now.

The Poll Tax Again

IT IS THE BEST of good news that Tennessee has repealed her fifty-year-old poll-tax law, which required a minimum of 50 cents and in many counties was much higher. The poll tax continues to throw its sinister shadow now in only seven states, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas.

Tennessee's action, of course, does not make a federal law any less desirable. By an end-of-the-session filibuster last November, a handful of Southern Senators were able to prevent a vote in the Senate on the Geyer-Pepper anti-poll-tax bill which had earlier passed the House by the impressive vote of 252 to 84, and to the support of which a majority of the Senate was committed. The poll-tax Senators were thus able to pervert democratic procedure as effectively in the Senate as they have for a generation in the poll-tax states where 6,000,000 white and 4,000,000 Negro citizens have been kept from voting.

But if the filibuster was a victory for reaction, it at least had the effect of acquainting the whole nation with the nature of the poll-tax system and increasing the determination of those who believe in democracy that the right to vote be restored to millions of disfranchised Americans. The debate on the poll tax brought into the light its whole ugly history; how it was written into the constitutions of seven of the eight poll-tax states in the 1890's and the 1900's, deliberately to disfranchise the people who had begun to find their political voice in the Populist movement; how it immediately reduced the electorate; how it is so deeply embedded in most states that removing it by state action is almost impossible; how it works to return unrepresentative and reactionary Southern congressmen year after year by microscopic electorates; and how they, by their seniority in Congress, maintain a stranglehold on congressional-committee machinery. The poll-tax election figures have been spread on the record: Smith of Virginia returned by less than 10 percent of the potential voters in the district; Dies of Texas returned by 7 percent of the potential voters; Cox of Georgia returned by 3 percent; Rankin of Mississippi by 2 percent. The disruptive effect on national unity of the denial to 10,000,000 citizens of any voice in the decisions of war and peace has for the first time become widely recognized.

That the importance of abolishing the poll tax, as a war measure, is more thoroughly understood than ever before is indicated by the introduction of six anti-poll-tax bills in the House in the first few days of the new Congress. But poll-tax legislation is referred to the Judiciary Committee, dominated by poll-tax Representatives, who, like their fellows in the Senate, showed in the last session that they would not willingly let the House vote on the measure. The legislation must be brought out of the Judiciary Committee by a petition

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signed by 218 members of the House, in order that the bill may come to a vote.

It is therefore urgent that at the expiration of the thirty legislative days during which the Judiciary Committee is permitted to consider the bill, a discharge petition be signed as soon as possible by 218 Representatives. The abolition of the poll tax is an important war measure.

Where Sweden Stands

RECENT EVENTS IN RUSSIA have greatly changed the situation for the Swedes. Their Premier warned them a week or so ago that they might be attacked at any moment. With the lifting of the siege at Leningrad, it is quite possible that Finland may be knocked out of the war. In that case, Sweden might be invaded by the Germans seeking to maintain their lines against the Russians lest Norway should be recaptured. These facts make particularly interesting an account of conditions in Sweden received by us by cable a few days ago from a correspondent in that country.

The Swedes wonder [our correspondent says] why the Nazis call Europe a fortress. Europeans, who are well acquainted with the war, know what "fortress" means. The first principle is that its defenders are united against a common enemy. But what Europeans except the Nazis consider the Allies their enemies? Certainly not the now disillusioned neutrals, or the Hungarian, the Rumanian and the worn-out Italian peoples. The victim nations of the New Order, prisoners of this fortress, are waiting to blow it up from within.

Today Sweden is a real fortress. Three years ago she might have been easy prey, spiritually and practically unprepared. Today she is ready to face all aggressors. Her army is strong and well equipped, morale is sound, for her people have learned the lessons of Norway and Denmark.

Col. C. W. Kleen, a Swedish military expert, writes: "If it is necessary for Sweden to fight, our troops rank among the best in the world. With their first-class training, equipment and weapons, an attack on Sweden would be no pleasure trip. The surprise element is out of the question." The Hamburger Fremdenblatt recently stated: "The modern equipment of the Swedish army cost enormous sums which the people pay willingly." During the last three years the army weeded out the quislings, thanks to the people, press and government; the press holds its own despite constant foreign pressure.

Day and night Sweden opens her doors to fugitives of the New Order, who stumble in along the south coast and northern mountain borders. To Norwegians, Jews, deserters from the occupation army, escaped French war prisoners, the Swedish border means salvation. Many Norwegians who have reached the border at the last minute, with the beams of Nazi searchlights upon them, have been protected by Swedish sentinels who have turned their own searchlights on the Nazi pursuers. Frenchmen who had hidden themselves in foreign cargo ships have reached Swedish islands by swimming ashore, where they were welcomed by fishermen and given dry clothes, food and rest—the only language in common between them being anti-Nazism. Swedish sentinels welcome all fugitives.

Sweden has revised her opinion of the Soviets, in spite of her historic distrust of Russia which dates back to the legend of Charles the Twelfth. The winter war against Finland renewed the old nightmare, but this attitude has changed. The Swedes had pity for Finland then but her second war is unpopular. The achievements of the Russians are warmly commended by the democratic press.

English and American films such as "Mrs. Miniver," "How Green Was My Valley" and "Gone with the Wind" are enthusiastically received. Air-force films and newsreels depicting the Allies' landing in Africa rouse stormy applause.

To appreciate Swedish opinion regarding Norway, note that 13,000 Norwegian fugitives here have helped the relief committees collect three million crowns in two months. During a holiday on January 6, 40,000 stayed on the job and donated their day's wages to Norway. Theatre performances, concerts and bazaars are given for the benefit of Norway. Four Swedes in Oslo control the distribution of food and clothing. Seven thousand seamen's families have cared for several thousand Norwegian children, feeding them daily. Norwegian prisoners of war receive gift parcels. A Swedish invitation to send over thousands of Norwegian children has been extended twice; Sweden is very anxious to welcome them. At a Norway aid meeting, Riksdagsman George Branting, son of the great Hjalmar Branting, said: "The Swedish and Norwegian people are now so closely bound that one might almost say they are one people. Sweden needs a Norway as free and independent as herself."

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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Russia's Battle of Decision

THE RED ARMY is now waging the decisive battle in southeastern Russia. At no previous time has the Red Army—and with it the United Nations—had such a chance for major victory. The battle is now being fought in the same region in which the German offensive in the summer of 1942 took place. But the military significance of this region has grown considerably. In the summer of 1942 the German army attacked limited forces of the Red Army with its own major forces. The Soviets fought throughout the summer and fall of 1942 with limited forces, without using their strategic reserves, and while the bulk of their effectives were still stationed on the central front. Today, however, the Red Army is using its major forces to attack, while still retaining considerable reserves for the final battle.

The primary task facing the Red Army in this battle is complete military victory—finally to liquidate the potential offensive strength of the German army and to crush, as far as possible, its defensive strength. At the outset of the Soviet offensive, in the second half of November, one could still reckon with alternatives for Russian strategy: a great offensive, or one with limited goals. Today all symptoms indicate that the Soviet High Command is determined to deliver a crucial blow against the Germans. The General Staff has been assembling the forces for a great offensive since the fall of 1941. Lieutenant-General Kalinin, commander of the Volga military district (where an important part of the Red Army reserves have been concentrated and trained), wrote on January 29, 1942, in the Krasnaja Svesda: "Our reserves are earmarked for inflicting the decisive blow upon the enemy." This explains the cautious husbanding of the Soviet forces in the summer and fall of 1942: they were conserved, not for defense but for the coming great offensive.

The mouth of the Don, the Donets valley and the eastern Ukraine must today be considered as one single fighting area of a huge battle in which neither cities nor industrial centers, but primarily strategic positions, are decisive. At the same time it is a battle for the most vital economic objectives of southern Russia. Hitler designated his campaign in 1942 as the fight for Russian oil, grain and coal. The battle for oil has already been won by the Red Army. The Volga, the waterway of Russia's oil, and the rail line Baku-Tikhoretskaya-Stalingrad, are under firm Russian control. The fight for the big grain-producing areas in southeastern Russia, the Don and Kuban provinces, is now being brought to a successful conclusion by the Red Army, which is also proceeding to reconquer the Donets coal basin. If the Red Army occupies the Kharkov-Stalino line, it will have wrested decisive economic centers in southern Russia from Hitler. With the exception of Krivoi Rog's iron ore, there are no vital economic objectives west of this line. Hitler's oil strategy in Russia has already collapsed and now it will be decided in the field whether any of Russia's economic resources will still remain in German hands.

The chief calculation of Russian strategy centered around the belief that everything must be staked on the maintenance and growth of the country's military strength. It was assumed that a strong army could recapture territory, but that no economic objectives could be held in the long run against the German assault if the Red Army were weakened. The outlook for the Russian offensive is good because the tremendous losses of the enemy are continuously shifting the balance of forces in favor of the Red Army. The complete liquidation of the Sixth German Army near Stalingrad, the German losses in the Caucasus, on the Upper Don and on the Voronezh front, have greatly reduced the strength of the Nazis. German losses in material have been much higher in the last two and a half months than they were in the summer and fall of 1918.

The German Sixth Army was the Nazis' best single army. It had captured the Ukraine and had been in the vanguard during the 1942 offensive. It had been the pillar of the German southern front, it had received the important order to take Stalingrad, and it represented the concentrated offensive force of the entire Wehrmacht. This army and the army in the Caucasus were the nucleus of German strength. The army in the Caucasus was not quite so strong, but it consisted of crack troops: Bavarian and Austrian Alpine soldiers, SS divisions, tank divisions. The loss of the army in the Caucasus is a veritable catastrophe, following as it does the crushing defeat at Stalingrad. Today, after the loss of Tikhoretsk and Kuchevsk and the Russian break-through to the Sea of Azov, the situation of the German army in the northwestern corner of the Caucasus is virtually hopeless. Stalingrad was a magnified Tannenberg for the Germans, but the encirclement in the northwestern Caucasus is bound to be at least a Dunkirk for them, assuming that the German troops will find a way to escape through the Straits of Kerch or across the Sea of Azov. In the next few days the whole strategy of global war will be concentrated in the triangle, Rostov-Krasnodar-Novorossiisk; the Wehrmacht is there faced with its gravest test at the moment and Russia with her greatest opportunity.

The strategic positions of the Red Army are being continuously improved in the course of this super-battle. Any offensive maneuver begins with placing the attacking army in the most favorable position against the enemy forces. The starting point of the Red Army in

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its November offensive was decidedly unfavorable. South of Stalingrad, from the spot where the Soviets were delivering their decisive blow, they had no railroad in the rear. Since that time they have continued to recapture vital rail lines (the most crucial ones are the Stalingrad-Tikhoretsk and the Voronezh-Kamensk lines) and are inflicting blow after blow on the nearby positions and communications of the enemy. With precision and determination, the Soviet offensive is paralyzing one sector of the southeastern front after another. It is aimed at breaking up the German front into isolated sectors, then at finishing them off. First came Stalingrad and then the Caucasian front. The next blow will probably fall against Rostov, and the one following that against the sector Likhaya-Voroshilovgrad, northeast of Rostov, where so far the Germans have put up the most tenacious defense. The Russian blows against Kupyansk and north of Kursk show the dashing spirit of the Russian maneuver, for these blows throttle not only the northern sector of the southern Russian railroad (Oral-Crimea) but also the short cut connecting the German central front with the southern front, which runs from Smolensk via Bryansk to Orel, and from there via Kursk to Kharkov. The Russian offensive is bringing about the systematic disintegration of the unified German front and is preventing coördination among the different sectors.

The primary factor in the failure of the Germans at present is not the crisis of the German army but the crisis of German strategy. In other words: the German defeat has taken on gigantic proportions, not because the German army was weak but, on the contrary, because the powerful German army has been driven into a catastrophe by miserable leadership. Stalingrad, where Hitler left his army in the pincers for reasons of prestige, was an inconceivable fiasco. That after this experience he should have abandoned more forces in the Caucasian pocket instead of withdrawing them at top speed and using them somewhere else, for the defense of Rostov, for example, is a blood-stained joke. Yet when the army in the Caucasus was already in mortal danger, it was left at Krasnodar-Novorossiisk—at the bottom of the pocket—instead of having its retreat defended along the Tikhoretsk-Rostov railroad line. It is no exaggeration to say that today Hitler's strategy, compared to that of the Russians, stands in the same relation as the Gamelin-Weygand strategy did to the Germans' in May and June of 1940. The similarity is striking: no counter-maneuver, and passive acceptance of encirclement. The French catastrophe was, after all, caused in part by lack of armed strength, but Hitler lets his crack armies perish.

The Wehrmacht, despite the failure of its leadership, still possesses strong arms reserves, even though they have been reduced, and considerable, though diminished, fighting power. When the Russian offensive began, the Germans had three possibilities. Hypothetically speaking, they could have countered the Russian blow with a counter-maneuver. They were incapable of doing so. Another choice would have been to shorten their lines and stabilize the front in a tenacious battle, somewhat like the Russian battles in depth. That, too, was not done. The third possibility would have been a deep retreat and the establishment of a new defense front. After its terrific losses, the Wehrmacht is now forced to seek this third solution—not voluntarily and not to preserve its forces, but under Russian blows.

The most favorable solution for the German army under the circumstances would probably be a defense along the line, Taganrog-Kharkov-Orel. It is possible but not probable that it could hold out on this line. The extent of the German retreat will depend on the size of the German losses in the next few weeks, especially in the Caucasus, on the supply of German reserves and on the intensity of the further Russian offensives. It may be assumed that the German losses in the Caucasus will be very high, that there are now no really able-bodied and experienced German reserves except in the West—those troops designated to repel the Allied invasion; and that the Soviet High Command will do everything it can to crush the strength of the Wehrmacht for good. If in this campaign the Red Army recaptures the Donets Basin, Kharkov and the southern Russian rail line between Kharkov and the Crimea, then it will hold the most important strategic and economic positions of the Russian south and the collapse of the German army will become assured.

Because of the Russian success the United Nations today have opportunities which they did not even dream of two months ago. In view of the Russian offensive, every determined Allied action will have greater effectiveness. An Anglo-American offensive in Tunis will now have not only military but also increased psychological significance. A simultaneous and parallel defeat in Africa, added to the Russian catastrophe, would mean a terrible blow against German military prestige; it would further increase the mood of hopelessness and futility in Germany. Likewise, a highly intensified air war against German centers would have a psychological effect as never before. And finally, the Russian victories open up new perspectives for the great Anglo-American all-out offensive against the European continent. The moment moves ever closer when Hitler can be confronted with the alternative: either collapse of his front in Russia, or a rapid shift of all available effective reserves from Western Europe to the East. He can no longer hold the Russian front, keep reserves in the West and also scatter them throughout Europe. But the stripping of reserves from Western and Southern Europe will create entirely new possibilities for Anglo-American action. Under no circumstances should Hitler be given a breathing spell. The blows must fall without let-up, with all means and from all sides.

MAX WERNER

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Section 52 Is News

IT WAS NEWS, for a moment, when Howard Wash, a Negro, was lynched at Laurel, Mississippi, last October. It was news important enough for editorial comment in many papers when five of the lynchers, plus the deputy sheriff who had failed to protect Wash, were indicted by a federal grand jury at Jackson, Mississippi, several weeks ago. Yet the press had only half the story. When to the fact of this indictment is added the conviction of a deputy sheriff for failure to give police protection against mob violence in West Virginia a few weeks earlier, and it is seen that the story is the calculated result of a historic shift in practice by the Department of Justice, the news becomes the best and perhaps the most important reported on the domestic front during the period.

For years without end liberals South and North have tried to get a federal anti-lynching law on the statutes. The battalions of ignorance have been too strong. But for years there have been on the books Sections 51 and 52 of Title 18, United States Code. Section 51 makes it a crime to conspire to injure or oppress any citizen in the exercise of federally secured rights. Section 52 makes it a crime for anyone who is clothed with *state* or federal powers intentionally to misuse them to deprive any inhabitant of such freedoms as that of speech, of the press or of the person. The Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments are guarantees against oppressive action by state or federal governments. Sections 51 and 52 of the Code, Section 52 in particular, are sharp weapons to enforce those guarantees. When the federal anti-lynching bill was once more defeated last year, a group of lawyers in the Civil Rights Section of the Department of Justice, headed by Victor Rotnem, took up the sharp steel of Section 52, blew the dust off it and are using it with magnificent results.

Martin Catlette, a deputy sheriff of Nicholas County, West Virginia, was the first to feel the blade. Three boys, members of Jehovah's Witnesses, had come to Richwood, West Virginia, to distribute their strange literature. They were ordered out of town by members of the American Legion and the local police force. They left, but returned the next day to ask the mayor's protection while they handed out their pamphlets. They were taken to Sheriff Catlette's office. His contribution to law and order was a series of telephone calls to Legionnaires, notifying them that he had "the S.O.B.'s." A mob of about fifteen hundred people gathered. Sheriff Catlette, evidently a stickler for the proprieties as he chose to interpret them, took off his badge and announced: "What is done from here on will not be done in the name of law." The boys were forced to swallow great doses of castor oil. Then they were roped, led through town to the outskirts and warned to get out and stay out.

But then, under the direction of Raoul Berger, one of Victor Rotnem's men, Sheriff Catlette found himself indicted and convicted, by the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, under Section 52 of the United States Code. Judge Armistead Dobie delivered a momentous opinion. Twenty-five years ago the courts ruled that it is a denial of "equal protection" to refuse a Negro equal Pullman accommodations on the ground that a state law forbids it. Judge Dobie extended this principle, with perfect logic, from lesser matters to great ones, by ruling that it is likewise a denial of "equal protection" to refuse state police protection against mob violence.

Then came the Howard Wash case. Wash had been convicted by the local courts on October 16 of the killing of Clint Welborn, a white man. Wash claimed self-defense. The jury refused to deliver the death penalty. Wash was temporarily lodged in the Laurel jail waiting sentence to life imprisonment. Around six o'clock, Wash's wife and three-year-old daughter, one of eight children, came to see him. The grapevine had been at work, for when they left Wash was heard to say, as he kissed them goodbye, "Well, a man can't live forever." At two a. m., the mob, which, it is charged, was led by Nathaniel Shotts, Allen Pryor, Barney Jones and William Oscar Johnson, came looking for him. Luther Holder, deputy sheriff and jailer, had the key to the "mob-proof" steel front door, and he had plenty of time to lock the mob out. But instead he gave them the key—and Howard Wash.

Special Assistant Attorney Frank Coleman of the Department of Justice took direction of the case, in coöperation with the local United States Attorney, Toxey Hall. The highly respected Jackson attorney William H. Watkins presented the evidence to the grand jury. It took the Mississippi grand jury only five hours to indict Sheriff Holder and Shotts, Pryor, Jones and Johnson, under Sections 51 and 52, for conspiracy to deprive Wash of his constitutional rights. It charged further that Holder, under the color of law, "did willfully and unlawfully, fail, refuse and decline to protect the said Howard Wash."

Note that in opening up this road that may lead to protection for Negroes against mob violence without a federal anti-lynching law, action under these sections of the United States Code has been taken not merely by Washington officials, but by Southern jurors, Southern judges, Southern attorneys. Here is great good news.

HELEN FULLER

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Total Taxes for Total War

THE PREPARATIONS of the United States to finance the war have lagged far behind its preparations to fight it. In production, though many confusions and bottlenecks have occurred, we have not hesitated to adopt new designs and methods, and so inside of three years we shall have turned out a truly gigantic total of war goods and shall have channeled from civilian consumption far more than half of what we produce. By drafting manpower we have built up fighting forces that now begin to impinge on the extreme limits of our ability to arm and transport them. But in putting into the Treasury the money necessary to pay for all this we have been unimaginative. Thus we face a year of total war with a tax program which will, even if the President's suggestions for new revenue are adopted, pay less than half the cost, and without any adequate loan program to finance the rest.

The fault is mainly that of Congress, which always finds it easier to spend money than to collect it. We should not, however, overlook the failure of the Treasury to offer bold recommendations. The procedure has been to build on the inconsistent and patchwork structure of pre-war taxation, trying to squeeze a little more money from this source and a little more from that, carrying on drives for the sale of bonds, and trusting to bank loans to fill the gap. It is now high time to apply the stern logic of total finance for total war.

We Are Paying for the War. – There is a natural tendency in the mind of the taxpayer, and hence in the minds of his congressional representatives, to believe that he can have his cake and eat it too. He is glad to see the government create, at whatever cost, an invincible military force, but he regards the payment which he will have to make for it as an independent matter, which may be higher or lower according to the taxes which Congress may vote. If he doesn't pay for it, somebody else will—either future generations, or the banks. Generally speaking, this attitude is a delusion.

In terms of real goods and services, the war production program and the military manpower program have already determined what we must pay. We, as a people, would have to sacrifice that amount of goods and services to war even if Congress should repeal all monetary taxes tomorrow. And we should still have available the remaining amount of goods and services even if Congress should tomorrow raise tax rates enough to pay for the whole war without any borrowing at all.

War Production Is Taxation. – How can this be? The answers have been made many times by economists, though apparently nobody really believes them.

It is obvious that the government is going to get, in one way or another, all the money it needs with which to buy munitions and pay soldiers. If it doesn't get the money from the citizens, it will get it from the banks. Therefore it will have all the goods which are produced for it. And it is going to have the services of the soldiers, sailors and marines it conscripts. It is clear, then, that civilians will have to do without these goods and services, no matter what Congress does or does not do about taxes.

It is also obvious that what is left over for civilians after the demands of war are fulfilled cannot be increased, after we as a nation have reached our topmost rate of production. And we shall approximate that rate in the next fiscal year. The President estimates the remainder as being worth an average of $500 per person (including, of course, children). No matter how much money we may have left after paying taxes and buying bonds, no matter how gently Congress taxes us, there will not be any more than that for us to buy. If we had more money, the goods might become worth $600 per person, or $1,000, or $1,000,000, or anything else up to infinity. But the amount of goods would not grow. Where would be the satisfaction in paying $10 for a loaf of bread instead of 10 cents?

Why Finance Is Important. – It might be thought, then, that it is a matter of complete indifference how the war is financed, and what Congress does about taxes. But this is not true, for three reasons.

First, though all of us together cannot escape the burden, some of us may succeed in placing too heavy a share of it on others of us. How Congress distributes the burden is important. To be sure, there is not so much possibility of choice as in peace, since with so heavy a burden, Congress cannot possibly raise all the necessary money without taxing the rich, the middle incomes and the lower incomes (down to the subsistence level) about as much as each can pay. But if Congress, responding to the resistance of all these classes to heavier taxation, fails to raise enough, and we do not lend the government the rest of what is required, its borrowing from the banks will induce inflation. That will distribute the burden with favoritism to those who can better afford to pay higher prices, and to those whose selling prices rise faster than their costs.

Second, inflation would actually decrease the amount produced, both for civilian necessities and the war. During inflation, wages never rise so fast as the cost of living. That means that wage-earners can buy less food and clothing. And undernourished workers are less productive; underpaid workers may even strike. So we should not be able to reach maximum arms production.

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Third, after inflation, it is almost impossible to avoid deflation and unemployment.

Though Congress therefore cannot by any fiscal policy relieve us of the burden of war, Congress has no more important task than to distribute that burden justly and to avoid inflation.

What the Problem Is. – Let us for the moment forget all about income taxes, sales taxes, excise taxes, Ruml plans and all the other complications, in order to see the problem as a whole.

The government will have to spend, in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1944, $109,000,000,000. It ought to get all of that money either from taxes or from loans to it out of the current income of the citizens.

It is roughly estimated that after the government's needs are satisfied, there will be goods and services for the rest of us equal to about $500 per person. Therefore, ideally, the government should leave in the pockets of civilians an average of $500 per person—no less and no more. It should conscript the rest of our incomes for war, just as it conscripts soldiers.

If it did that, and if the estimates of production are correct, everything would come out even. It would have the $109,000,000,000 it needs. We should have the $500 apiece we could spend without bidding up prices. There would be no possibility of inflation.

The problem would be simple, if income were equally distributed. We should, of course, have to vary the average somewhat, allowing smaller exemptions for children and other dependents, and larger exemptions for adults. We should have to exempt payments not made for goods and services, such as savings and insurance, payments of taxes and repayments of debt. But a fairly simple conscription of income above a minimum would solve the problem. The trouble is, however, that income is extremely unevenly divided. People with markedly larger incomes would not know how to live on this scale; if they were suddenly forced to do so, drastic readjustments would have to be made in our economic and social fabric. We should have a social revolution accompanying the war. The higher-income groups simply would not allow such legislation to be passed. The problem is to see how little concession to them the nation can make without too much turmoil.

Relative Tax Burdens. – It is a far cry from this, however, to the burdens we have so far imposed. According to The Federal Reserve Bulletin, in the present fiscal year all taxes in this country, including state and local taxes, will take 24.5 percent of the national income. In the same year all taxes in Britain will take 36.8 percent of the national income. It may be argued that since Britain is on a far more skimpy ration of civilian goods than we, her people have more left with which to pay taxes, and since they are in imminent peril of invasion, they are more ready to pay them. But how about Canadians, who in the same year will pay a tax bill amounting to 39.1 percent of their income?

Nor is the problem so hard as it looks when we think of that $500-per-person average. The average per-capita income in this country in 1938 was only about $509. In 1942 it was about $895. The persons who are very far above this figure (on a basis of family income) are so few in numbers, relative to the others, that even though their individual incomes may be high, they could in any case pay only a minor fraction of the total taxes. The bulk of the tax receipts must come from those who would not suffer too great an inconvenience in reducing their expenditures for goods and services close to the average value of goods and services which will be for sale. We ought to be able to approximate the ideal, even if we must make some concessions to our customary inequality of income.

Income Taxes. – Now let us have a look at some of the traditional ways of raising revenue. The income tax is the fairest, because it can be graduated according to ability to pay, and it is a potent revenue producer. Obviously it is possible to obtain more revenue from it by either lowering the exemptions or raising the rates or both. Exemptions are now about low enough to conform with our ideal—but only if nearly everything above them were taken away. It must be remembered that the size of the exemption affects not only those who are exempt, but the taxes paid by those who have income above the exemption. The logic of the situation, therefore, would dictate a very high starting rate to be paid by those who have to pay anything at all. Ours under the present law amounts to 19 percent. Britain's starts at 32.5 percent, on the first $660 of taxable income (after an exemption of $440 for the single man and $624 for the married). Then it rises to 50 percent. The effect of surtaxes increases the rate, after $8,000 of taxable income is reached, from 60 gradually to 97.5 percent. There is no legal ceiling on incomes, but the effect of the heavy taxes is to approximate one. Thus there are in England today only 32,000 incomes from which $8,000 or more is left after the income tax, and only 80 above $24,000.

It is true that Britain relies much less on property, excise and business taxes than do we, and so can put a heavier effective tax on incomes. But we could collect much more than we do from income taxes.

Though it is the best tax we have used, the income tax has obvious faults. From the point of view of the taxpayer, it is a terrible nuisance, and may become ruinous or even impossible to pay, if income in the year of payment is much smaller than in the preceding year, on which the amount of payment is calculated. From the point of view of the Treasury, it involves enormous labor, is difficult to police, and in years of rising prices or increasing expenditures causes deficits merely be-

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cause there is a lag of a year in collection. It also is subject to important loopholes. Two of these at least—the exemption of income from bonds of states, counties and cities, and the possibility of avoiding taxes by gifts of property from one spouse to another in community-property states—should be corrected. I believe, however, that it would be unfair and bad social policy to enforce joint returns by husband and wife for earned income.

These faults become aggravated, the more we are forced to collect by income taxes.

Profits Taxes.—Income taxes on corporations are a large source of revenue, but they are far from logical. There is, for instance, no fair way of graduating them according to ability to pay, for the simple reason that corporations are not individuals, but are collections of property which may belong at one extreme to one person and at the other extreme to a million persons. Thus, a corporation which belongs to one man and makes a profit of $1,000,000 ought ideally to be taxed at the same high rate as an individual income of $1,000,000, but one with the same profit which belongs to a million persons with equal shares ought not to be taxed at all, since the profits of each would be $1. When one tries to relate profits to invested capital, all sorts of accounting uncertainties arise. Taxation of profits may have undesirable effects on costs or on the volume of new investment. In normal times, it would be simpler and more effective not to tax corporation incomes at all as such, but to catch them when they show up in personal incomes as dividends, salaries or bonuses, and of course to make proper provision to tax additions to corporate surplus which is not distributed, especially if that surplus is not invested in new production.

We cannot now abandon corporation taxes, however, and there is an almost perfect case for taxing excess profits due to war. This is justified, not only by the popular abhorrence of war profiteering, but by the fact that there is no good economic reason why the government should not recapture at the source any profits above normal due solely to its war orders. The only good countervailing argument is that we must make a concession to the profit incentive in order to stimulate zeal and efficiency on the part of the munitions makers. We make no such concession to soldiers or volunteer workers or government officials or rationed consumers, but perhaps the business man in his own sphere of operations is a somewhat lower order of being.

Our excess-profits taxes, as has often been demonstrated, offer a big loophole by allowing the taxpayer a choice between two methods of reckoning the excess—either against a base period or against a certain percentage of "return on capital." The British are far more severe and logical in this respect than our business men will apparently permit us to be. They tax away 100 percent of the excess made over the profit of the standard year or years. Twenty percent of this tax is to be refunded after the war, on the assumption that it will come in handy in reconversion to peace. (Here the incentive is allowed for.) There are some corporations whose profits have either risen little during the war, or have fallen; therefore five percent of all profits must be paid in cases where this would be greater than the excess-profits tax.

We certainly can collect more from the excess-profits tax than we do.

Regressive Taxes.—Excise taxes, sales taxes, gross income taxes like the victory tax, are all regressive, in the sense that they are not graduated according to ability to pay, and therefore bear more heavily on the poor than on the rich. Certain concessions to the progressive principle may be made in such taxes—such as the exemption of twelve dollars a week in the victory tax and the placing of excise taxes on "luxuries" which it is assumed will be bought mainly by the rich. But once you admit the principle of tax progression, you might as well go the whole hog and have a really progressive tax. There is no virtue in regressive taxes, except that they are relatively easy to enact, some of them produce a good deal of revenue—like the taxes on cigarettes and liquor—and they can be collected out of current income instead of a year late, like income taxes. But there may be progressive taxes with these same virtues.

What most endears the general sales tax to Congress and the National Association of Manufacturers is that it is a way of passing as much of the tax burden as possible over to those who are not congressmen or manufacturers. Many of the rest of us by this time are in on the secret.

We need no general sales tax to raise as much as it is humanly possible to raise. Let us have none of it. And let us not have further resort to any regressive levies until all other possibilities have been exhausted.

Spendings Taxes.—A tax which has some of the virtues of a sales tax but none of its faults is the spendings tax suggested by the Treasury last year, and contemptuously turned down by Congress with scarcely a day's consideration. Though this is by far the most original and the best suggestion to come from the Treasury, it was introduced too late in the session and with almost no explanation or publicity. Its unfavorable reception was due partly to the fact that people did not understand it, and partly to the fact that it was a competitor with the sales tax, which was supported by a powerful lobby.

The spendings tax is simply a progressive tax like the income tax, but calculated on the basis of what you spend rather than what you earn. It exempts savings, insurance, debt payment, doctors' bills, purchase of war bonds. For a period in which the aim is to limit

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spending and encourage saving it is nearly perfect. The suggestion possessed two faults—that the tax was to be added to the regular income tax instead of being substituted for it, so that many needless complications were introduced, and that, like the income tax, it was to be collected a year late.

Still more interesting are suggestions from various sources to ration, not merely the purchase of certain scarce commodities, but total individual spending. At least one of these, put forward by Jerome Weinstein and described briefly in The New Republic of June 15, 1942, proposed to give each consumer a ration book of coupons with monetary values covering the amount necessary to sustain a minimum of subsistence, and to sell additional books at successively higher rates. It would be necessary to present the coupons when buying commodities, in addition to the purchase price in money. Thus the money collected by the government for supplementary ration books would be a progressive tax on spending, collected before the spending was done. Although little attention has been paid to this proposal, it seems to me to come fairly close to accomplishing what we really ought to do.

Collection at the Source, Ruml Plan.—There are numerous ways of collecting income taxes at the source, such as deducting them from wages and salaries, from dividends, etc. This is more convenient for the taxpayer, since he is never tempted to spend money which he does not get, and it does not come out of his earnings in one large lump—or in four. It is better for the Treasury, since the collection is almost automatic, and the money rolls in at more frequent intervals. Of course it is impossible to collect at the source from farmers or people in business for themselves, and difficult, though possible, to collect in this manner more than the standard or normal tax which everybody who is not exempt has to pay.

The Ruml plan adds a quirk to collection at the source by suggesting that the tax be based on the income of the year in which it is collected instead of on that of the previous year, as has been the custom. This is of advantage to the taxpayer by getting him out of tax debt, and especially to the taxpayer whose income is reduced from one year to another. It is of advantage to the Treasury when prices or income are increasing, because receipts grow more quickly, instead of lagging a year behind. The present is such a time.

In order to make the change with as little hardship and confusion as possible, Mr. Ruml suggests forgiving the taxes of the previous year when the system is installed; otherwise two years' taxes would become due in one year. This has aroused violent opposition. Literal-minded people argue that it would deprive the Treasury of a year's tax receipts or that some people would "get back" more than their share. I find it difficult to understand this objection. Suppose, for instance, we make the change this year. Congress has already fixed the rates to be paid in 1943. What difference does it make to the Treasury whether in figuring how much we are to pay we apply the rates to our 1942 incomes or to those we are now earning? None whatever, if the income does not change from one year to the other. If, as everyone expects, income is larger in 1943 than in 1942, the Treasury would gain. If a smaller income were expected, Congress might raise the rates. Collection of taxes will go on as long as the government lasts and, for you and me, as long as we live. Taxes will be paid every year in any case. That loss of a year's taxes is purely mythical and no one would get back one cent.

Of course people who have smaller incomes this year than last would not have to pay such high taxes, and this may involve some abstract injustice. But such people are not numerous enough to affect the receipts adversely.

Naturally, the shift ought not to be made in this way in the case of estate and gift taxes.

Compulsory Saving.—Compulsory saving is merely promising to pay back to taxpayers, after the war, part of what they have to pay the government now. The government takes more from them, and gives them bonds or other promises in exchange. The idea was originally that of John Maynard Keynes, to finance the war without inflation. The same result would be achieved if the government took the same amount in taxation. But people may consent to higher rates if they feel that they are merely lending part of the money, and will get it back when they can use it to greater advantage. Britain has made concessions to the idea, and so has Canada. It is embodied, in an extremely mild form, in our victory tax. Certainly, unless we resort to this device while increasing taxes as much as possible, we shall not get by without borrowing too much from the banks.

As a matter of fact there is less real difference between straight taxation and compulsory saving than is usually believed. The proposal is mainly a selling device for an inflationless war—a highly worthy object. The government gets just as much money from us (provided we consent) whether it is called a tax or a loan. If it is called a tax, there will be no loan to repay after the war, and our purchasing power may then be correspondingly increased by reduction of taxes. If it is called a loan, our purchasing power may be increased after the war by its repayment, but we shall then have to pay the taxes to cover it. Of course the government might liquidate the loans out of bank credit if unemployment existed and it were thought desirable to expand purchasing power. But even if there were no loans to repay, the government could follow exactly the same policy by a drastic reduction of taxes, and borrowing from the banks to meet its ordinary expenses.

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A Total Tax Program.– If we put all these ideas together and try to pick out as good a tax program for the emergency as possible, what do we get? I get, instead of the income tax, a steeply graduated spendings tax, combined with rationing of spending, collection at the source, compulsory savings and pay-as-you-go. Aside from that, we should probably have to keep excise, estate and gift taxes about as they are, and improve the excess-profits tax.

How could this new tax be worked out?

First, let us set our exemptions to approximate the average value per capita of the goods which will be for sale to civilians, let us say $600 for single persons, $1,200 for the married, and $250 for each child.

Then let the employer pay each employee in cash that part of his wage or salary which equals the exemption in his case. And let the remainder, if any, be paid direct to the United States Treasury, while in lieu of that amount the employee receives a War Savings Certificate, made out in his name, signed by the employer. This certificate would be non-transferable and non-negotiable, but the employee could exchange it at any bank or post office for an equivalent amount of war-savings stamps or bonds. In making payments to the government, the employer would of course deduct and deal separately with social-security taxes, employee contributions to retirement plans, voluntary subscriptions to war bonds and the like. If both husband and wife were employed, they could divide the exemption any way they liked. (The Treasury could check.)

Now let the employee apply at his rationing board for spending-ration book number one, which would contain coupons equal to the amount of cash paid him annually by the employer—his exemption. This book would be free. He could not buy anything without presenting to the store coupons equivalent to the value of his purchase—in addition to the price in money.

If the employee wished to buy more than his exemption would allow, let him ask for spending-ration book number two, containing coupons for any amount he wished up to, say, $1,000. For this book he would have to pay 50 percent of its buying value. The ration board would accept in payment War Savings Certificates for 150 percent of the full value of the book, and would return to the purchaser cash equal to its value. Additional books could be purchased at graduated increases, until it was necessary to pay, say, a 97.5-percent tax for the last $1,000 of a $25,000 budget.

Certain payments either are not made for goods and services or should be exempt anyway. Among them are savings other than government bonds, old debts, mortgage instalments, insurance, doctors' and hospital bills, state and local taxes. In such a case the employee would present to the rationing board the War Savings Certificates necessary to pay the bill, receiving their full value in return, *without any coupons*. The cash would be of no use in buying articles subject to tax, since non-exempt sellers could not sell without getting coupons.

How about people who were not employees, like farmers, lawyers, small business men? They would have to get their spending ration books just like employees, and would pay money for them instead of savings certificates. They would be obliged to put their unspent surpluses into war bonds. In their cases, enforcement would probably require individual income and spending returns, like present tax returns.

Spending rationing could accompany any specific rationing of the sort to which we are already accustomed. It could cover all goods and services we buy at regular commercial establishments, since the government could check their sales against the coupons received. Minor purchases, like carfare, newspapers, etc., could be omitted without much harm. Some special plan would have to be worked out to cover payment of domestic servants. But, on the whole, the system would be easier to administer and check, and would allow fewer loopholes than the present income tax.

What would be the result to the individual? Anyone can work it out for himself. Suppose you are a married man with an income of $3,000 and no children. You could spend $1,200 without paying any tax. If you saved the remaining $1,800, or all but what you paid for insurance and the doctor, you would not pay any tax at all. If you are an employee, you would not even have to make out an income-tax return. But if you spent for non-exempt purchases all you possibly could, you would pay a tax of $500 on the first $1,000 of excess expenditure, and of the remaining $300 from your income you would have to pay, say $103 for the privilege of spending the last $197. Thus your total spendings would be $2,397 and your tax $603, or about 34 percent of your taxable income. That would be stiffer than the present income tax, but not so stiff as the Canadian or British, and it would be a far more powerful inducement to substitute saving for spending. And whatever tax you did pay would be out of current income, before the spendings were made.

What would be the result to war finance? If nobody spent more than the exempted amounts, the government, after collecting other kinds of taxes, would have borrowed from the citizens enough to cover the entire remaining cost of the war. There could be no inflation, and from that result we should all benefit. But many would spend more than the exemption. From them, the government would collect taxes ranging from 50 percent upward of their excess spending. It would not cover the whole cost of the war without borrowing from the banks, but the excess purchasing power in circulation would probably be manageable. For, unfortunately, many have even less to spend than the exemptions, and the goods they cannot buy would be available for those who spent more. We should have come about as close as a straggling and disordered economy can to total taxes for total war.

GEORGE SOULE

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Washington Notes

The House: Opening Gun

THE ILL-WINDBAGS OF THE HOUSE may be blowing somebody good in spite of themselves. They have made the front-row space surrounding the well of the House a constant low-pressure area. They have made The Congressional Record a chamber of horrors fit for reprinting unedited in the Hearst press. They have disgusted many new members and even a few old, hardened ones. The House has always had its eccentric characters, but never before have cruel political fates thrown up a collection like Cox, Fish, Dies, Smith and Hoffman in one heap, equipped them with seniority and lung power and permitted them to assume exclusive authority to speak for American democracy. The effect, most of the time, is of a psycho-dramatic clinic with the attending psychiatrist answering a telephone somewhere else. It is a situation which must wear itself out eventually. The majority of rational, reasonable members of Congress cannot tolerate it much longer.

So far the majority not only has done nothing to close the bags but has welcomed the escaping wind in its hair. The buffoons have been suffered and encouraged. Even Hoffman, with his no-pockets suit and his Peglerian whimsies, has found it possible to get an occasional laugh. Nobody has bothered to remind Fish that his former secretary is taking a perjury rap for telling substantially the same story Fish once told the House. Dies, always the star performer of the crowd, positively wowed them with his address officially opening the 1943 winter campaign for further financial relief of his committee.

The Dies address was not spontaneous and is well worth reading in the expurgated version that came out in The Congressional Record and later in The New York Journal-American. It is in some respects a masterpiece of demagoguery and obviously represents the best of J. B. Matthews' devious thinking. In the original, there were rough and unfortunate passages, but these were exorcised or smoothed out prior to publication. In the original, Dies made the struggle to lick bureaucracy more important than the foreign war and announced that fascism is not anti-Semitic—meaning that it is more important to lick Roosevelt than Hitler and it is of course not un-American to bait Jews. But neither of these outcroppings of granite appeared in the retouched landscape of Americanism.

The speech served Dies's purpose admirably. Communism up to now has been his magic word. By featuring it in his incantations, he could get headlines and appropriations. But it lost much of its power when his list of alleged Communists in the government service was debunked on the authority of J. Edgar Hoover and America's alliance with fighting Russia gave the American Communists new and wholly undeserved anointment. With communism's magic worn out, Dies had to turn to spies, but quickly found that they were just too hard to catch. He still hasn't caught one. The next best thing—in the present situation even better than spies and Communists—is bureaucrats. They fit the mood of the House. They can be blamed for rationing, price control and noxious regulations of all kinds. If they can be shown to be slightly Communist, so much the better. It provides a familiar link with the past.

If they aren't Communists, at least some of them have foreign names—Jewish names—and that is something, anti-Semitism being no foreign invention that any good American need be worried about adopting. As Woodruff of Michigan observed in a speech congratulating Dies, "most of these individuals are of foreign birth or extraction." Following this formula, Dies is justified in chasing out of the federal service any employee who is not named Deer Foot. Woodruff, for example, would be a suspicious name for a bureaucrat, highly suggestive of foreign antecedents.

There was another equally serviceable string to the Dies bow—the implied suggestion that any individual or organization guilty of trying to beat a sitting congressman for reelection should be boiled in oil. Such are purgers, and purgers are not popular with congressmen. Dies couldn't turn the House against him by denouncing them, but he could scarcely build a popular political movement on the proposition that congressmen, once elected, may never again be opposed by respectable citizens.

Cunning as the Dies speech and some of the lesser efforts of his associates have been, there is probably nothing in them that is very dangerous because they won't stand close examination. The trouble is that the extremists are not just talking. They run the Rules Committee and the Rules Committee is acting with unprecedented arrogance and irresponsibility. It jammed through a rule on a resolution extending the Dies Committee without a decent hearing or any notice of a hearing. A representative of the CIO who tried to testify was brushed aside by Eugene Cox, the boss of the committee, with the comment that the committee knew where he stood and needn't bother to hear him. Several members of the House who wanted to testify were not notified.

At the same session, the committee approved a resolution authorizing Howard W. Smith, the Virginia realtor, to investigate any government agency against which anyone had a complaint. This could be used to smear any federal agency that failed to build a road or a government building within value-inflating distance of Smith's Virginia acres. Even if it were, this wouldn't be so flagrant a misuse of congressional power as Cox's investigation of the Federal Communications Commission while the Commission was still investigating a fee Cox collected from a radio station after successfully trying to obtain a license for its operation. There is a law against this sort of thing.

Yet, while all this chicanery was going on in Rules, other House committees were settling down to serious, responsible work. It became apparent that the isolationists were not getting anywhere in their fight against renewal of lend-lease. Even the cleverly appealing Ruml plan seemed to be suffering from the Treasury's statement that it would cost the government $10,000,000,000 and create, at one stroke, a new class of 1943 war millionaires. Furthermore, most members of the House and Senate seemed to understand that it wouldn't be quite wise for Congress to investigate the Justice Department every time it tried to prosecute an anti-trust violator or a peddler of seditious literature. The fact seems to be that this Congress is not quite so bad as its Rules Committee and its orators make out.

Washington T. R. B.

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Wartime Documentaries

FUTURE HISTORIANS will find that aside from the Russians, who had only to send their movie-makers into their front yards, the most informative documentaries of the war, up till now, shown in the United States were made by the National Film Board of Canada. America's fact films are produced by the OWI, Hollywood and The March of Time. The OWI's purpose is to show how perfectly American industry, government and people work together in this war. It does the best job technically, but it uses a formal, coldly passive camera that seldom catches a spontaneous action. The OWI soldier in "Troop Train" is well combed and brushed, rehearsed in his lines and directed in his actions until there isn't much left of him. "Troop Train," however, has the fine distinction of trying it alone without a narrator. "Paratroops" has the narrator back, but has also some good music and the photographic nobility of an Eisenstein picture, where man is shown large, daring and efficient against the vastness of nature. Hollywood's most informing documentary is a Pete Smith two-reeler which describes in detail the brutal but effective hand-to-hand fighting techniques being taught our soldiers.

The Canadian films, "The World in Action" series, written and edited by Stuart Legg, have material from the vital zones of the war, material that hasn't been prepared, set and posed in a studio nor sterilized by overzealous censorship, nor conceived in the pseudo-realism of Luce, Inc., or Mr. Metro. These shorts are intelligent editing jobs on film gathered from every available source in the world; so that their value is dependent on the vitality of the individual shots rather than on progressive development. The most terrifyingly beautiful scene I've seen of this war is in their latest release, "The Invasion of North Africa," of an early dawn populated by General Montgomery's tanks, each tank fuzzily discernible in the less than half-light, but jutting out of desert sands on all sides as far as the eye can see. It is this shot and others (the horizon full of the 850 ships that made up our convoy to Africa, the grotesque Brobdingnagian quality of a German railroad cannon being moved up to the Russian front, a bird's-eye view of the Libyan desert's cobweb of dirt roads, every foot jammed with motorized transport) that achieve the sense of quantity in this war. This short would be worth seeing if only for the one shot of Casablanca's French citizenry saluting the captured German officers with a gesture of four-letter implication.

Many of the early films of this series were marred by too long and complex a story structure, which called for excessive cutting and extended explanation by Lorne Greene. They attempted a detailed analysis of Haushoferian geopolitics, of the civilization of the Japanese in two reels, or ten minutes. Yet their material, in contrast to that of the OWI, was unconventionalized: the opening sequences of "The Mask of Nippon" are as revolting as anyone will ever see—they include a Japanese soldier throwing a child into the air and catching it on his bayonet, and whole groups of Chinese being buried alive. "North Africa" and "Fighting Freighters" are neither so all-encompassing in structure nor so ear-shattering in talk as were the earlier ones ("Our Russian Ally," "Inside Fighting China," "Food for Conquest"). "Fighting Freighters" is a fair account of the merchant marine, with a rough, thorny feeling that Coward's "In Which We Serve" lacked. The Canadians have been criticized for juxtaposing German as well as Allied film, because, it is said, one didn't know which side was winning in a "World in Action" war. Obviously, however, enemy film which showed some of the 2,000,000 tons of Allied shipping they sank in six months of the war is necessary to a discussion of the merchant marine.

Behind our American shorts there is the unpleasant sense of meeting a quota; proving that we are doing our part. There is too much dwelling on obvious facts—that our army is well fed ("Army Food"); that the universities are taking part in the war ("The Universities in Wartime") and that the railroads are moving our troops efficiently, but not nearly enough of the actual documentation seen in Russian and Canadian films. This war is being thoroughly filmed by our government, and it seems to me that releasing at least some of this action film along with OWI food talks would create a better understanding.

MANNY FARBER

American Patriots

The Patriots, by Sidney Kingsley. National Theatre, January 29, 1943.

THIS IS A TIME when our American way of life and government is under sharp review, and the American people is being scolded, officially and unofficially, as unaware, shallow and indifferent. It is thus a good time for a prize-winning dramatist to present a play in which the social thought of our eighteenth century and the words and characters and struggles of some of the great founders of our nation are given us in solid and hopeful terms, direct, simple and clean. According to Mr. Sidney Kingsley and his Washington, Jefferson, and even Hamilton as he turns out at the end of the play, we can be trusted to find our own kind of truth and find it through our own constitutional government.

"The Patriots" is based on the famous conflict between the ideals represented by Jefferson and Hamilton and on Washington's relation to that conflict and to that taut moment in our history. Mr. Kingsley has tied the play wholly into this period when a crisis threatened the Republic, those years following the Declaration of Independence when the final decision had to come as to the direction we should follow, whether toward the monarchical systems of Europe, the crowns, coronets and mitres that Jefferson accused Hamilton's party of itching for, or toward a strengthened faith in the new Constitution and the people's power to govern themselves. We are today, of course, in a great period of national crisis, and on the parallel between today and the moment in the play the dramatist relies for his emotional interest. The security of this appeal and the skill with which he has chosen his material are such that at times we forget that this is a historical drama at all.

"The Patriots" as drama suffers from a certain vagueness of plot line, in the earlier part especially. It is hard to see why in so admirable and serious an effort some of this could not have been ironed out, if only in the course of the directing and rehearsing. A good many passages suffer, too,

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from certain difficulties in style and dialogue that arise from the direct use of actual letters and documents, the mere factual repetition of which at this distance in years does not necessarily give it stage truth. The play adds up, nevertheless, to one of the few serious and pertinent things out of a low-grade season. It puts us, for a change, in good company, on a fine plane. It is thoughtful, full of warm feeling, and its general content is rich, honest and noble as regards its application to our day.

The costumes are bad in "The Patriot" and impossibly worn. The acting in the main roles is much above the average. Mr. Raymond Edward Johnson, known chiefly as a radio artist, fails to convey Jefferson's style and intellectual edge, but he quite genuinely catches the vivid humanity and democratic idealism. Mr. Cecil Humphreys' Washington is a notable performance, dignified, witty, never stuffy, and convincing to look at. The Washington role is admirably written. STARK YOUNG

The Bandwagon

If war comes betwen Russia and Japan it will be the result of Nipponese aggression, Russian sources have stated. The Soviet clearly does not intend to provoke war with Hirohito; certainly not until it has finished with the Germans and Italians. – *From Clifford A. Provost's column in The Detroit Free Press.*

It was indicated, nevertheless, that a move toward republican institutions, at least in Algeria, which is not a colony, would do no harm to the Allied cause and would not conflict with the American policy of refusing to compromise the freedom of the French to determine their own regime. – *A dispatch from London to The New York Times.*

Deep in the Heart of Texas

The poll tax is one of the strongest forces in the defense of the rights of the people. The moment the poll tax is repealed in rushes many undesirable voters who care little or nothing for the welfare of the country. Any voter who refuses to pay $1.75 for the privilege of voting is a very poor citizen, and if given an opportunity of voting, the chances are that he would vote for the most inefficient candidate. . . . The poll tax is the constitutional light for freedom, justice and liberty, which in turn spell human uplift, economic liberty, social security and political justice. – *A letter to The Dallas Morning News.*

The Gentle Rain from Heaven

The bombs fell upon the British people like showers of refreshing rain which brought to a fine blossoming many of the best qualities which lay beneath the surface of their characters. – *From a speech delivered at a meeting of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations by Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, United Kingdom High Commissioner to Canada, as reported in The Toronto Globe and Mail.*

Total-War Department

The gunnery student learns and memorizes the shapes of friendly and enemy craft, and the most effective way to shoot at each. – *From "Preparing Our Fliers for Combat," in The Reader's Digest.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Russia and the Chinese Communists

SIR: Your readers would, I am sure, appreciate knowing the sources upon which you base the statement in your excellent editorial of February 8 concerning the Chinese Communists.

Chinese, both official and unofficial, categorically deny this statement and attribute it to propaganda from persons interested in deflecting military aid from China.

I deplore this sort of statement unless it can be backed up by published facts. It puts another wedge between our Allies in Asia and ourselves, and there are too many such divisive wedges these days. Even the columns of The New York Times (Topics of the Times, February 2) gloat over India's having been "put down" by the ever-rights, Churchill and Wavell.

Aside from the fact that it is too early to gloat, Japan not having been conquered yet, nor Hitler, the fact is we should not for Russia's sake as well as China's make the accusation that Russia is using the Communist Party in China for her own ends. If this is true we must suspect Russia of making the same use of the American Communist Party, and it is precisely this sort of suspicion which will make impossible our very necessary coöperation with Russia, both now and after the war.

New York City PEARL S. BUCK

[Our information came from sources we consider reliable; naturally, such statements would be denied by official or unofficial spokesmen for Chungking.

We intended no suggestion that Stalin was ordering the Chinese communists to take action hostile to Chungking. So far as we know, the Chinese communists are ready and anxious to cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek in fighting Japan. Our editorial urged the utmost support of Chiang Kai-shek by the United States in continuing the war against Japan. – THE EDITORS]

The President's Appointments

SIR: Walton Hamilton's "The Smoldering Constitutional Crisis" in the January 18 issue is brilliant analysis, couched in just about the best prose style around. But he concludes with a reasoning that bothers me a little.

After demonstrating the new and increasing role of the "independent agencies" in government, their lack of responsibility to the public, and the danger of their capture by corporate power, he concludes ". . . the breach which threatens disaster is between a popular executive and an operative government which voters cannot reach. Unless 'we the people' can make the industrial system the instrument of the general welfare, the dominant interests will take over the government. For the separation of state and economy is gone."

True enough, an industrial system which was the instrument of the general welfare would not present the threat which it today does. Yet how, by Hamilton's own reasoning, are we to make it such an instrument without the aid of that tremendously important sector of government control represented by the "independent agencies"? There is a gap between the people and the agencies. That gap only the popular executives can span. Why a "breach . . . between a popular executive and an operative government . . ."? Who appoints the top officialdom of these agencies? To whom are they responsible? Whose job it is to see that they are not packed by representatives of monopoly, or maladministered in the interests of the few, rather than of the many?

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Was the President *compelled* to name Knudsen, Stettinius, *et al.*, to the top posts in the early defense set-up? Or Nelson to the WPB? Was Fortune not right in attributing the last election results to a desire to rebuke the President because "he would not—or could not—purge"?

The counter task would seem to be, at least immediately, not "to contrive ways and means for subduing these agencies to the democratic process," but rather to mobilize public opinion to a point where the Executive would no longer find it "expedient," for reasons temperamental or political, to temporize. It is his job, through appointment or purge, to make these agencies instrumentalities of the democratic process.

Brooklyn, N. Y. LOUIS WALINSKY

Argentine Beef

SIR: On reading Michael Straight's article, "The Fight for Food," in your February 1 issue, I am reminded of the fuss made two or three years ago concerning the importation of beef from Argentina. Why cannot our government or our people arrange to import beef from Argentina, free of tariff duty, for ourselves, and for our allies, if necessary? It would be paid for by an equal value of exports, to the benefit of both countries and of the good-neighbor policy.

A shortage here of meat will injure the dairy industry for several years. Veal is now served in hotels and restaurants as plentifully as pork or beef. Why destroy the young stock so freely?

Oshkosh, Wis. JOHN HARRINGTON

Big Business and the Future

SIR: The big-business drive of 1944 is on! Adman Arthur Kudner in The Atlantic Monthly sees the post-war future bright under the leadership of "dauntless," "bold" business men. The New York World-Telegram (December 17) reprints Kudner's glorification of his big-biz clients, editorializes a "Yea, brother!" But not a word about labor's share in building the future!

New York City DAVID K. BIRD JR.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

From H. C. Ryan, of Chicago, comes the simple solution of the problem of avoiding the tripe of radio announcers. "Many of your readers complain," he writes, "as all intelligent people should, about the nauseating quality of radio advertising. There is, however, a simple remedy which I am glad to pass on without charge or obligation. My remedy is simply not to listen to the commercials." He advises the use of the "chairside model" radio to make the operation easier.

The Ethical Culture Society of New York has set up the John L. Elliott Institute of Human Relations, an adult-education enterprise, as one memorial to Dr. Elliott, the Society's long-time leader. The announcement says: "The emphasis throughout the work offered is on linking information with evaluation, so that sound judgments may result." Current political and social issues will be discussed at weekly meetings through March. The program is available at the Society's headquarters at Sixty-fourth Street and Central Park West, New York City.

Stuart D. Preston of New York takes a shot at us with the following note: "The liberals have had a wonderful sniping party ever since Darlan was recognized in North Africa. Now you boys must be all tired out and it looks as if FDR and Churchill weren't so dumb as you pretended to think. May I suggest you climb back on the wagon and take a much needed rest?" Mr. Preston, we don't quite get what you are driving at.

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"A USEFUL and sober survey of the institutional aspects of Nazi Germany: its governmental structure, its party rule, its legal system, and the various aspects of what passes for its cultural life . . . may be read with profit along with the Whittlesey and Dorpalen volumes by anyone who cares to think of the monumental task involved in 'adjusting' Germany after this war." — *Chicago Sun.* 355 pages, $2.75

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Stepmother Congress

ANY NEWCOMER to Washington is impressed by the profound hostility between Congress and the administrative agencies. It seems to be as instinctive and undying as the war between the sexes. Congress takes the female role: she is like a scolding housewife whose husband is sometimes unfaithful, besides having flighty notions, and whose children go about their own concerns without paying any attention to her advice and abuse. She suffers from a deep feeling of frustration. She fixes the yearly allowances and sees that the family doesn't run too far into debt; and yet her unruly children, who are the government officials, scarcely bother to tell her what they are doing. Did they ever have to scramble for a few miserable votes? They have all the advantages, the university degrees, the new ideas, the press agents to tell the newspapers about them; while she, poor woman, is held responsible for their silly mistakes. Oh, she thinks to herself, I work my fingers to the bone and do without servants and never once get anything for my pains, not even a kind word on the editorial page or a new dress to go to church in—and me that's living in danger of being cast off at the next election. "What mischief are you up to now?" she screams at the bureaucrats. "You ungrateful wretches, I'll cut you off without a penny."

Meanwhile her children are afraid to say what they think about Congress. Even in private conversations they speak discreetly, know that Washington is a hall of echoes and that a scathing or, still worse, a funny remark about Henry B. Puddingface, the honorable Representative from the cow country, might mean that their appropriations were cut in half. Yet in spite of their caution they are badgered by Congress, given contradictory instructions by Congress, dragged away from their desks to testify before congressional committees (and perhaps kept waiting half the morning while the chairman has a neighborly chat with the boys and girls from Four Corners High School); they are forbidden to spend money on useful projects and instead are forced to waste it on the Honorable Puddingface's district, because he managed to juggle the items in their budget; and finally they are subject to utterly irresponsible attacks by congressmen without being given any chance to answer them. Mother Congress has become their hateful aunt and cruel stepmother.

It is this domestic feud between Congress and the administrative offices that explains the long life of the Dies Committee. Scores of congressmen know that its reports are full of misrepresentations and outright slanders. They know that Mr. Dies is doing Goebbels' work by confusing the public and lowering the standards of government service. Yet both sides of the House applaud him when he demands a general purge of what he calls "irresponsible, unrepresentative, crackpot and radical bureaucrats"; and later both sides of the House will vote to continue his appropriations. Even when his abuse of the executive agencies is clearly unfounded, malicious and disruptive, he is fighting their battle; he is expressing their resentment at being deprived of the power they used to exercise.

That feeling of frustration is emphasized time and again by Roland Young in his excellent study, "This Is Congress."[1] He believes that it is largely justified, in the sense that the legislative branch of a democracy should play a larger part in determining policies than Congress has played for the last ten years. He admires the work of the executive agencies, but he has absolutely no sympathy with the people who call for a "managerial society" or a "mass democracy"; both these terms, he thinks, are politer synonyms for fascism. Political decisions should be made, not by salaried administrators, but by an elected assembly. It is the continuing task of Congress to act as the voice of public opinion and to make certain, he says, "that our great government operates efficiently and equitably."

He believes that Congress has partly failed to carry out this task, but for reasons that are technical and even accidental, instead of being inherent in the nature of a democracy. Congress is simply not organized as a body that can effectively determine our national policies. There are far too many legislative committees and their functions are badly defined, so that nobody can be certain which of them should have charge of a given bill, should discuss the work of a given department or should investigate a given situation. In general, Congress has no acknowledged leaders who are responsible for decisions on national affairs. If it seized political power, as it now seems bent on doing, it would still lack the proper machinery for exercising that power, and the result might be inertia and confusion.

To change this situation, Mr. Young does not think that any constitutional reforms would be necessary. Instead he makes four technical suggestions which, he says, "would improve the position of Congress as a thinking agency." First, he proposes that the committee system should be entirely reconstructed; that instead of 125 standing committees, special committees, joint committees, commissions and visiting boards, there should be no more than ten in each house. Second, he proposes that the chairmen of these committees should be chosen by a caucus of the majority party, and that they should be organized into a political group of no more than twenty members, to be known as the Legislative Cabinet, with the result that Congress would have its own responsible leaders. Third, he proposes that methods should be evolved for better communication between Congress and the administration, with Congress keeping a supervisory power over departmental policies (and incidentally with the Senate surrendering the right of unlimited debate). Fourth, he proposes that an annual budget should be prepared in the simplest form possible, and that, instead of itemizing all expenditures, lump sums should be appropriated, with Congress receiving a careful audit at the end of the year.

Mr. Young's proposals are not intended to solve the great political problems of our time. Their one purpose is to make Congress capable of discussing and deciding those problems according to its own ideas—which, I take it, would continue to be those of American business men. Our government would be no more liberal than before, but at least it would be more effective. The hostility between the legislative and the executive would not be ended, but at least it would be conducted according to the rules of civilized warfare. Congress could preserve its own powers without the dangerous help of Martin Dies. MALCOLM COWLEY

[1] This Is Congress, by Roland Young. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 288 pages. $2.75.

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In Honor of William and Henry James

A Special Section

"Our Passion Is Our Task"

. . . This method of narration by interminable elaboration of suggestive reference (I don't know what to call it, but you know what I mean) goes agin the grain of all my own impulses in writing; and yet in spite of it all, there is a brilliancy and cleanness of effect, and in this book especially a high-toned social atmosphere that are unique and extraordinary. . . . But why won't you, just to please Brother, sit down and write a new book, with no twilight or mustiness in the plot, with great vigor and decisiveness in the action, no fencing in the dialogue, no psychological commentaries, and absolute straightness in the style? . . .

I mean . . . to try to produce some uncanny form of thing, in fiction, that will gratify you, as Brother—but let me say, dear William, that I shall greatly be humiliated, if you *do* like it, and thereby lump it, in your affection, with things of the current age, that I have heard you express admiration for and that I would sooner descend to a dishonored grave than have written. . . . I'm always sorry when I hear of your reading anything of mine, and always hope you won't—you seem to me so constitutionally unable to "enjoy" it. . . . How far apart and to what different ends we have had to work out (very naturally and properly!) our respective intellectual lives.

THUS WILLIAM JAMES to Henry James on the publication of "The Golden Bowl" in 1905, and the latter's unusually sharp reply to the older brother whom he adored —and could barely read. There is always an obtrusive irony in honoring the Jameses together: they could never fully honor or, after a certain point, really understand each other. This was something that both recognized and that William almost enjoyed. They were always seeking to gratify each other, "as Brother," for the Jameses loved each other as passionately as they debated their differences, and delighted in each other's careers. Never as in the James family, indeed, was so little envy or indifference brought to so many conflicting intellectual ambitions, and never was so much fraternity brought to so little mutual understanding. How deeply the elder James delighted in his genius sons, though he could only, from his vast intimacy with God, look down on both science and art as frivolously incomplete! How ready William always was to read each of Henry's essays and novels as it came along, so quick with eager brotherly praise, so ready to define Henry's subtlest triumphs and to miss them! How much Henry stood in awe of William, showered him with adulation, professed himself a "pragmatist," and resented it when William forgot to send even a technical monograph!

Yet though their devotion to each other was profound, their essential antipathy of spirit went deeper still. But antipathy is not the word: there was only a kind of loving non-recognition. Similar as they were in their studies of human consciousness, in raising to an ideal end the operative supremacy and moral serenity of an individual "center of revelation," they could only smile to each other across the grooves in which each had his temperament. Henry at least knew his failure to recognize the design unfolded in William's empiricism, where William so genially slid over the symbolic design stamped on Henry's every effort, praised him for his "high-toned social atmosphere," patronized him, and missed that need to *use* the novel as a medium of inquiry that cut Henry's career off from the Anglo-American fiction of his generation. Henry was always an isolated figure in the philosophic James household, where William was its reigning active heir, the versatile young naturalist who spoke in his father's hearty voice even when he revolted against his father's foggy theology, the naturalist in a scientific era whose interests drew him everywhere. William could at least follow Henry's works and comment on them (he commented on everything)—praise the early style or deplore the later, admire a character and confer a judgment. When William's first book, the great "Psychology," appeared in 1890, Henry could only fidget in embarrassment and complain that he was too absorbed properly to appreciate "your mighty and magnificent book, which requires a stretch of leisure and an absence of 'crisis' in one's own egotistical little existence." Or, later, say of "The Pluralistic Universe" that he had read it "with enchantment, with pride, and almost with comprehension. It may sustain and inspire you a little to know that I'm *with* you, all along the line. . . . Thank the powers—that is, thank *yours*—for a relevant and assimilable and referable philosophy . . . your present volume seems to me exquisitely and adorably cumulative. . . ."

There it was always: William's thought was "adorable," but Henry was too absorbed. Henry had always been absorbed, where William's mind opened outwards to all the world from his father's notations on Swedenborg to psychical research, from Kant to William Jennings Bryan; Henry was absorbed in making novels. William tried to be an artist and a chemist, went to Brazil with Agassiz to collect fishes, took an M.D. between periods of almost suicidal depression, debated endlessly with his opponents and loved them all, learned psychology by teaching it, wrote letters to all the cranks about their manias, gravitated into philosophy, fought against imperialism; Henry went on making novels. He made novels as he had made his first critical essays, his famous "impressions" and the enduring myth of England he absorbed from his childhood reading in Punch: by storing and molding what he had, and by never taking in anything he would not use. They had tried to make a lawyer out of him, they tried to teach him some elementary facts of science; Henry went on collecting impressions—impressions of Italy and of the pictures he found in Italy (Emerson loved these), impressions of Newport, Paris, Geneva and Saratoga; impressions of the mourned cousin, Mary Temple, whose face was the face of Milly

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Theale, Maggie Verver and Isabel Archer. The only culture he had was literature and pictures, and the only literature he sought was the nineteenth-century novel—he did not care even for poetry; but he had a mission and his mind and life composed a single order of desire: he made novels.

To the other Jameses Henry was always the marvelous unknown child who sat quietly alone, dreaming pictures and studying novels, and always bewilderingly content with his own mind. He seemed so little to adhere to anything except his own tropisms of taste; he had no "message," no positive belief or apparent need of one. William, on the other hand, was racked until he could find an ontology as plastic as life and true of every last thing in it; and he ran excitedly through all the disciplines, rejecting, disputing, extracting, until he could square the "irreducible facts" with the highest fact of his own nature. To Henry he might have said what their father had said to Emerson: "Oh, you man without a handle! shall one never be able to help himself out of you, according to his needs, and be dependent only upon your fitful tippings-up?" William always needed a handle; and he could use one only by reacting against something. What he principally reacted against was his father. Henry drew from the elder James by enclosing himself in the independence the father preached; he did not react against his father's theology, he was indifferent to it. William, however, was too much like his father in combativeness and vivacious curiosity to reproduce anything but his temperament. Nothing could have seemed more lethal to him than his father's glacial metaphysics, poetic as many of its elements were. The elder James had escaped the dreariness of Calvinism—its belief in a kind of haphazard criminality of human nature—by nailing the human mind and will to the dreariness of a perpetual mysticism. The world was now joy, where Calvin's had been the fear of fate; but the only release allowed man was submission; the only hope a projected union with God. Utopian socialist though he fancied himself, he saw the natural world only as a medium of communication with supernatural truth. Thought was reduced to the labored ecstasy of extracting mystic "secrets"; man lived in an automatic effort at revelation.

Nothing was more alien to William than any belief which bound man to something not in his particular nature and experience. In his biological theory of mind the mind was not a mere faculty, as the soul was not a region; it was an effect and transmission of consciousness, and purposive; the endlessly probing antennae of the whole human organism, and the exercise of it. All of a man's life was engaged in his thought or spoke or hid in it; the mind did not "receive" ideas, it shaped them in seeking adaptability; it sought ends. Yet what was so significant in William's psychology, often condemned as "literary," was that it buttressed in moral philosophy a theory of knowledge. Though he was almost the first American to establish psychological studies in the laboratory, he was always impatient with laboratory psychology and a mere corpus of facts. What he was getting at, as in his pragmatism, was not only a more elastic sense of reality, a more honest and imaginative perception that all life and thought begin in discrete individuals and are shaped by their differences, but a need to show that what was not a real experience to an individual had no existence that one could name and take account of.

To the merely bookish, who would rather intone their knowledge than be shaped by it; to the merely devout, who would rather worship their God than be transformed by Him; to the formal logicians and contented monists, for whom the world's disorder and depths are so easily sacrificed, William James has always seemed loose or even vulgar because he preached that an idea has meaning only as it is expressed in action and experience. That he was so misunderstood is partly James's own fault, since he *would* speak of "the cash-value" of an idea in his characteristic attempt to reach the minds even of those for whom cash-value was the only value. But it is largely the fault of ourselves and our personal culture, since the rarest thing in it is still moral imagination. For what James was leading to in his pragmatism—once it had served as a theory of knowledge—was moral in the classic sense of conduct, moral in the enduring sense of the order and use of a human life. Tell me, he seemed always to be saying to those who were so content with ideas rather than with thinking, with metaphysics rather than with morality, what is it you *know*, what is it that is changed in you or by you, when you have achieved your certainty or knowledge? What is it you live by, appreciably, when you have proved that something is true? James knew well enough, and could formulate the ends and satisfactions of his opponents better than many of them could; but that was only incidental to his essential aim. Knowledge is for men that they may live—and men may live for ideal ends. So is the monist happy in his all-enveloping unity, the rationalist in his ideal symmetry, the mystic in his visions. And all of these exist, said James; all of these must be taken into our account of the human experience and the demands of our nature. But do not confuse, he went on, your individual need of certainty with the illusion that some supra-human order is ascertained by it; do not confuse your use of reason—and delight in it—with the illusion that what cannot be named or verified by rationalism does not exist.

To say this is not to forget how treacherous James's ideal of the provisional can be, and that he is particularly dissatisfying when he merely brings us to the borders of moral philosophy. He triumphed by disproving all the cults and systems which ignored the shaping power of man's individuality, by threshing his way through pre-scientific myths and post-scientific arrogance. But like so many American naturalistic thinkers, he took a certain necessary definition of the good life for granted (or confused it with the Elysian fields of the Harvard Department of Philosophy?); whereas it is the unrelenting consciousness of it that is most lacking. Yet what is most important here is that the great particular for him, as for all the Jameses, was the human self, and that out of it they made all their universals (though it is always a question what Henry's universals were). For the elder James the center of existence was the self that seeks to know God and to be sublimated in Him; William's theory of knowledge began with the knowing mind that *initiates* the ideas to which the test of experience is to be applied; Henry found his technical—and moral—triumph in the central Jamesian intelligence which sifts the experiences of all the other characters and organizes them. This, had William not so clearly pined for Stevenson when he read Henry's novels, he might have recognized as Henry's "handle." For in an age when

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all the materials through which William was running so eagerly demanded large positive answers, wholesale reconstructions and a world view, Henry had quietly and stubbornly reproduced his father's mystical integrity in the integrity of the observing self. The novel for him was to be *histoire morale*, a branch of history that sought the close textures and hidden lights of painting; but the highest morality was not so much in the story as in the exercise of the creative principle behind it.

That devotion to a creative principle was the great epic of Henry's integrity, as everything he ever sought or wrote was a commentary on it. In most writers their works exemplify their ambition; Henry's were about his ambition, as they were, in one sense, only his ambition written large. Just as William's vision always came back to a loose sea of empiricism in which man could hold on only to himself, so Henry's was to define and to fill out the moral history of composition. His theory of art was not preparatory to a manipulation of experience; it *was* his experience. His interest was fixed on writing about the symbolic devotion of writing, as so many of his stories were of writers (but only of depressed or unsuccessful writers: there was no "dramatic process" in the surface of success). And the central Jamesian intelligence, in all his disguises as "the foreground observer," "the center of revelation," the artist planning his effects, the critic "remounting the stream of composition," was always sifting and commenting in turn. "The private history of any sincere work," he wrote once, "looms large with its own completeness"; it was his symbol of man's completeness. He studied his novels endlessly as he wrote them, corrected them endlessly when they were published, wrote a preface to each in which he summarized the history of its composition, defined his every intent and use of means, speculated on the general principles they illustrated, and at the end, as he hinted to Grace Norton, might have written a preface to the prefaces, commenting on *them* in turn. Secretions within secretions, knowingness within knowingness: out of so self-driven an integrity, as out of the intense interior life of his characters, there could be grasped the central fact of the effort, the search, the aura of devotion, that gave meaning to the artist's life and form to his work. And always the thread remained firmly in the artist's hand, pulling it back to himself—the story of Henry James was the story of Henry James writing his novels.

Life for both always returned to the central self. Significantly, it was always the richness of their personal nature that distinguished all the Jameses, and the overflow of life in them that gave them their vascular styles. Ralph Barton Perry says of the elder James that he felt his visions so intensely, and had so many together, that he had to get them all out at once. The elder James was always running over, laughing at himself for it, and never stopped running over. Like William, he had so many possible thoughts about so many things; and he had the James exuberance (the seed *was* Irish) that always ran so high in them despite the unending family history of illness. Superficially, of course, no two styles would seem to be so different as William's and Henry's: the one so careful to be spontaneous, the other so spontaneously labored; the one so informal in its wisdom, flinging witticisms, philosophical jargon, homeliness and hearty German abstractions about with a seeming carelessness, protesting doubt at every point, yet probing with angelic friendliness in all the blocks of the human mind; the other so *made* a style, solemnly and deliciously musical, reverberating with all the tones of all the books Henry had ever read, forever sliding into cozy French idioms, shyly offering the commonest spoken expressions in quotation marks—Henry always sought to be friendly. Yet both were great spoken styles, intimate and with an immense range of tone: the only difference being that William talked to friendly Harvard seniors and Henry later dictated to his secretary. What no one has ever said enough about Henry's style, of course, is that it was the family style become molten: like all the Jameses, he wrote instinctively out of his amplitude. He gushed in his letters and he purred in his novels, but there was always the James motor power behind him, their terrible need to seize and define everything within their range. And more, there was that "blague and benignity" in his style that Ezra Pound caught: the tricky interior changes of pace, the slow mandarin whisperings, the adjectives that opened all vistas for him like great bronze doors, the extraordinary *soundings* he could make with words, and covering them all, always his deceiving gentleness, the ceremonial diffidence, and his sudden barbs and winks.

To think of their styles is to be aware of the great innocence that was in all the Jameses, an innocence of personal spirit if not of moral perception. Financially secure, encouraged by their father to be different and uncontrolled, even to be without a profession, both ranged at will in what was still the household age of modern thought—a period when the security of their society encouraged those first studies in the naturalism of the psyche, and a voracious interior life. The only revolution either could envision was in new ways of knowing; and it is significant that William led the way to "the stream of consciousness." They all had the natural outpouring that came with innocence, the innocence that trusted in all the data of their inquiry, took the social forms for granted, and based life upon the integrity of the observing self. "In self-trust are all the virtues comprehended." It was the Emersonian faith of their culture, in all its genteelism and instinctive trust in individuality. Just as the elder James's theology committed man, as it were, to be a recording angel, to seek the necessary revelation and inscribe it, so they were all recording angels, much as William said of Henry that under all his "rich sea-weeds" and "rigid barnacles and things" he cared only for making novels. Life was here and now, in all that system of relations between minds in which experience immediately consists; man *studied* it. The highest aim, somehow, was to be an author. But there is no very great sense of tragedy in any of them (compare them with the Adamses), no sense of that world process which is something more than William's metaphysical novelty and pluralism; the great depths of life are not in them.

In a time like our own, when men are so lost in themselves because they are so lost from each other, the Jamesian integrity can seem small comfort to us. We can take no social form for granted; we cannot possess or be possessed by those explorations in human consciousness which only parallel—or at best reveal—our quest for security. To say this is not to make a judgment on the Jameses, but to define our predicament. Our enforced sense of evil has

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nothing so creative in it as their innocence; and their legacy is still most precious for its symbolic integrity, its trust in mind, its superiority to our "failure of nerve." Even Henry James's greatest contributions to human pleasure and self-comprehension, or his insistence on the integrity of a work of art, are less important now than the emblem his pride raises before us. Even William's full devotion to realism, his imaginative projection of complexity, are less important to us now than the respect he breeds in us for all the forms of reality and our necessary understanding of them. And it is this which is now most visible in them and most important to us: the simplicity of their respect for life and the intensity of their elucidation of it. They both worked in that period of modern history when the trust of man in his power to know was at its highest, when the revolution of modern political democracy, science and materialism carried along even those who were skeptical of the idea of progress. And if we feel at times that they are even greater than their thought, more far-ranging than the forms that contain them, it is because they burned with that indestructible zeal which we need so badly to recover —the zeal that cannot blind men to illusion, but must always rise above it, the zeal that cries that life does have a meaning: we seek to know.

In one of those exquisite stories, "The Middle Years," in which Henry James was always writing out the lesson of his own loneliness and neglect in the story of the celebrated writer neglected and misunderstood by those nearest him, the writer cries on his deathbed: "It *is* glory—to have been tested, to have had our little quality, and cast our little spell." "You're a great success!" his young attendant assures him. And Dencombe replies, wearily, but with mounting exaltation: "We work in the dark—we do what we can—we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion, and our passion is our task."

ALFRED KAZIN

William James as Artist

WHAT has always been hard for James's professional colleagues to swallow is that he was a pluralist as well as a philosopher. Traditionally, the aim of philosophy has been to unify, to reduce diversity to one, or at most two, principles by which all other things, known or suspected, might be explained. This is only another way of saying that philosophers have usually leaned toward the religious and scientific temperament, which seeks oneness, or toward the moralist's, which demands the duality of good and evil.

James was in many ways a moralist too, and in a recent volume of commemorative essays,[1] H. W. Schneider has brilliantly assessed this phase of his thought. But the inclusive pattern of the Jamesian philosophy has manyness for its principal feature. Hence in the eyes of strict monists and dualists he seems to leave undone the task he professes to undertake. Assuming that on the contrary James did fulfill his task, in virtue of what other bent or bias does he espouse pluralism? The answer is, I think, the esthetic bent, the bias of the artist.

It is nothing new to say that James possessed an artistic nature, and Perry's great biography furnishes all the facts that one could want to document the assertion. In youth he thought of becoming a painter; as a mature man he developed by dint of hard work a superb prose style; and throughout his life he was responsive to literature and the arts, very astute as a critic, and remarkably so when it came to works as yet little regarded by men of his own generation. In short, unlike many or most philosophers, he was a cultured and a traveled man. So much is common knowledge. But the more intimate relation between James's esthetic sensitivity and his philosophic outlook deserve wider notice, both as helping to an understanding of the system and as supplying a link in the history of ideas.

Consider first James's lifelong battle against the Absolute. What was the basis of his objection to that Encyclopedic Knower which was the solace of his confreres and the backstop of their systems? His objection was the inescapable reality of the "point of view," the fact, namely, that no human being can obtain more than a partial vision of experience, and is therefore in no position to expound what the Absolute sees and thinks. It follows from this that any unity in the world of things is made or created by a combination of human efforts. Unity comes also through the work of specially sensitive minds, by inspiration: "Only in some . . . philosopher, poet, or romancer, or when the common practical man becomes a lover, does the hard externality give way, and a gleam of insight into . . . the vast world of inner life beyond us . . . illuminate the mind."

Note the conjunction of philosopher and poet. But whatever its extent or quality, the human point of view, according to James, is controlled by subjective interests, instinctive or emotional in origin, and out of which all rationality grows. The degree to which these interests are coördinated, squared with fact and truly expressed measures the success of the individual's reason, or if he is a philosopher, of his system. Experience is thus carved out by each man in accordance with his temperament, and his vision has the shape of his imaginative powers. All these statements need but slight translation to turn them into the creed of the artist, whose work grows out of his instinctive and emotional resources, and seeks to express in adequate form something that will have the status of truth.

Emotion may of course breed error and illusion, so James insists on due regard being paid to sensation, to the concrete fact given by experience, apart from all preconceived ideas and ingrained habits. This is what made him hospitable to a great variety of ideas and persons—a hospitality which caused him always to stretch his philosophical formulas to include all the irreducible data before him. James's systematic pluralism was thus the result of a strong desire for concreteness and diversity, combined with the philosopher's usual desire for order. But he would not purchase order by explaining away the thing he saw, or the thing he felt sure someone else saw. Even illusion has a place among realities and it must be accounted for, not dismissed. As he exclaimed impatiently about some of his fellow psychologists, "*Can* serious men take facts in these verbal ways?" To say all this is to say that James was a

[1] In Commemoration of William James, 1842-1942. New York: Columbia University Press. 234 pages. $2.75.

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very definite kind of artist. For the starting point of a work of art is a concrete perception; the recognition of the diversity of points of view, with the interests that motivate them, is the first requisite of the dramatist; and the desire for coördination of parts is the goal of creation in art no less than in philosophy.

The word "creation" is itself a symptomatic Jamesian word. The path that James took to reach philosophy, we must remember, was through psychology, after a fruitless attempt at an artistic career and a very fair start in the biological sciences. But both in biology and psychology, pure collecting and classifying was hardly James's forte; his mind was truly inductive but not statistical. He was interested in meanings, and psychology gave him an opportunity to exercise at once his experimental and his interpretative and metaphysical gifts. The result is well known: he revolutionized psychology by freeing it from both materialism and idealism. The mind was no longer a machine nor did it do any "copying" of a preëstablished order. The stream of thought revealed its objects with complete vividness, immediacy and continuity, for, like an artist, the mind had created its order.

It may occur to someone at this point that there are many artists, particularly today, who would deny this view of experience and this parallel with artistic creation. Indeed, not a few moderns directly repudiate what they conceive to be James's outlook. That is why I said earlier that James's philosophy expresses the insights of a certain kind of artist, the romantic artist, by which I mean the historic romanticist of the Elizabethan age or the nineteenth century. The principles common to them and to James are: inclusive realism and concreteness, the dramatic view of the human mind, the belief that novelty and creation are facts, and the valuing of will, energy and risk, which is to say also, respect for the irrational source of human powers. In proof of which here is a passage written by James with a philosophical purpose, but which admirably fits the case; it sounds as if written to denounce classicism in art: "Just so . . . when we condemn all noble, clean-cut, fixed, eternal, rational, temple-like systems of philosophy. These contradict the *dramatic temperament* of our nature, as our dealings with nature and our habits of thinking have so far brought us to conceive it. They seem oddly personal and artificial, even when not bureaucratic and professional in an absurd degree. We turn from them to the great unpent and unstayed wilderness of truth as we feel it to be constituted, with as good a conscience as rationalists are moved by when they turn from our wilderness into their neater and cleaner intellectual abodes."

To my thesis it may none the less be objected that James once or twice denounced "romanticism" at considerable length. This is literally true, but the word romanticism needs interpretation and James's context provides it in full. He follows in part the vulgar usage that makes romantic synonymous with sentimental and weak-willed, and in part his own definition, which would make romanticism the philosophy of the spectator, the dilettante who throbs on the side-lines but takes no part in life—a neo-romanticism, perhaps, rather than the original brand. For what was repellant to James in dilettantism was equally so to the greater part of the genuine romanticists. Some—and we think of Wordsworth and Hugo—were strong moralists; others, such as Goethe, Carlyle or Stendhal, relied like James on the energies of men. A historical and critical definition of romanticism would certainly find James eligible for inclusion, and his kinship with Nietzsche would be corroborative evidence, since both are pro- and anti-romantic in the same senses. James's own label for the view of the mind which he supported in F. W. H. Myers and Freud is "romantic," and he contrasts it with the rectilinear, static and trimmed-up view, which he terms "classical."

Nor was that all. James's function in philosophy was to make its discoveries available for the purposes of life, which is an exact parallel to the romanticists' consciousness of the individual and social function of art. However often we mistake "romantic" for "escapist," the fact is otherwise. I can only refer doubters to the latest works on Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Victor Hugo, Weber or Mazzini. Both in James and in the romantic artists, it was a sense of history, that is, a sense of things-in-their-context, which made them oppose the classic taste for abstractions, on the one hand, and the pseudo-realistic taste for "reduction," on the other. This is the one principle which brought James and Hegel together—Hegel's sense of the original chaotic sweep of things, the interpenetration of contraries, and the role of the idea in organizing meanings. And it is owing to this vision that fifty years after Hegel, James led philosophy back to the *inclusive* realism of the romanticists, after the reactionary interlude of Realism with a capital R had narrowed down reality to matter.

Since both the classical and the "realistic" views suppose Nature to be there, ready to be copied, and the Jamesian romanticist believes in its partial creation by the mind, the latter is faced with the problem of what test to apply for knowing a true insight. If no preëstablished norms are furnished, what will rein in the rabid imagination of the poet or the extravagant intellectual parturition of the philosopher? James answers for both: the pragmatic test. This means that the product, whatever it be, an artistic form or a truth, is to be judged, not by its origin or formal copying of its antecedents, but by its consequences, its tangible fruits. In the Preface to the "Lyrical Ballads," Wordsworth had already suggested that if poetry was to use simple words, it must be distinguished from prosaic nonsense by the fact that it was "interesting in itself or led to something interesting." Blake's whole philosophy of poetry rests on the same assumption, which in its furthest form rejoins what James called the Will to Believe and the Sentiment of Rationality. Says Blake: "Does a firm persuasion that a thing is so, make it so?—All poets believe that it does . . . but many are not capable of a firm persuasion of anything."

Stendhal applied the same criterion of belief to justify Shakespeare and the romantics, and even among the moderns who avowedly oppose James, one finds Mr. Allen Tate saying, most pragmatically, "a poet is interested in results." Needless to say, Blake's "firm persuasion" and Mr. Tate's "results" are not to be taken as "crude results" or "foolish persuasion." Earlier, Blake had written, in a Jamesian spirit, "A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees." The wise man is presumably fastidious about his beliefs and searching as to the sentiment that convinces him he has achieved rationality. Hence the "satisfaction" which is in James the pragmatic test of thought is to be applied to

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it with as much conscience and precision as are usually shown in applying the similar test of pleasure to art.

The further consequence of James's pragmatism is his refusal to make thought or art end with itself. The passage is well known in which he suggests that if one's ego has been elevated into a sense of Olympian power by an artistic experience, one should try to discharge the feeling into some action—even if it be as slight as speaking a kind word to one's aunt. He thus defines the antidote to sentimentality and reminds us again of the romanticists who, having to purge themselves of the sentimentalist legacy of the eighteenth century, grappled with the habit by analyzing it pitilessly, as in "Werther," or diagnosed its hold upon them by showing in their confessions that its evil was not in the feeling itself but in the paralysis of the will.

It is perhaps unnecessary to go farther and show that James shared a number of personal traits with the very artists who first made the "man of genius" known through their autobiographies. He too was a master of introspection, as the willingness to admit the determinant of "interest" in perception suggests; he was a man of faith, adventurous in thought and deed, who could discover the infinite amid the homely and concrete not only in Walt Whitman but in Homer; he had a tenacious love of life, punctuated by spells of depression, inaction and irritability, yet his total output of energy was remarkable for both quantity and quality; he enjoyed and often indulged an impish desire to make fun of professional gravity—and suffered for it; he was no friend to philistine values, and hated massive success of a commercial leveling sort almost as much as he did the pale virginal aspirations of Chautauqua to "the higher things." He was, in short, like all conscious democrats and true romanticists, an aristocrat of the feelings.

Did he then add nothing to the conceptions that the romantics had already embodied fifty years before him? One might reply that it is a great deal to have recovered these insights after their eclipse under the realistic and idealistic palls of the mid-century. Yet I think James did something more by his unpremeditated translation of artistic notions into both psychology and philosophy. He did not simply restate them; he argued them in a great variety of forms, giving them the status of rules rather than what they had been—exceptions. He showed, even more fully than Freud, that thought is symbolic and life a work of art. For the criticism of art itself he furnished materials ready-mined and still to be used by anyone who will pick them up. James was the first to regret having formally neglected esthetics in his "Psychology." But he made up for it by the liberality with which he scattered nuggets of artistic experience. None of his conclusions was the work of an onlooker. As Perry justly remarks in comparing him with Dewey, "While James *is* percipient, artistic, religious, Dewey elaborates ideas *about* perception, art and religion." James the artist thus showed not simply what could be done with a philosophy grounded in science and ethics and enlarged to the scope of art, but what could be done by a philosopher who acted it out. Equally bent on action, the romanticists variously failed and succeeded, but the most thoughtful of them still believed that their systems must imitate the pattern of unity set by the classical models. They felt but they did not dare say with James *and in the plural:* "It seems to me that all sorts of realities and completenesses are possible in philosophy, hitherto stiffened and cramped by the silly littlenesses of the upper and lower dogmatisms, alternating their petty rationalistic and naturalistic idols of the shop. . . ."

JACQUES BARZUN

Attitudes to Henry James

HENRY JAMES is at once the most and least appreciated figure in American writing. His authority as a novelist of unique quality and as an archetypal American has grown immeasurably in the years since his death, and in some literary circles his name has of late been turned into the password of a cult. But at the same time he is still regarded, in those circles that exert the major influence on popular education and intelligence, with the coldness and even derision that he encountered in the most depressed period of his career, when his public deserted him and he found himself almost alone.

To illustrate the extent to which he is even now misunderstood, let me cite the opening gambit of the section on James in "The College Book of American Literature," a text currently used in many schools. "It is not certain that Henry James really belongs to American literature, for he was critical of America and admired Europe." The attitude so automatically expressed by the editors of this academic volume obviously borders on caricature. The responsibility for it, however, must be laid at the door of all those critics and historians who, in response to a deep anti-intellectual compulsion or at the service of some blindly nationalistic or social creed, are not content merely to say no to the claims made in James's behalf but must ever try to despoil him utterly. The strategy is simple: James was nothing but a self-deluded expatriate snob, a concoctor of elegant if intricate trifles, a fugitive from "reality," etc., etc. Professor Pattee, a run-of-the-mill historian of American writing, permits himself the remark that James's novels "really accomplish nothing." Ludwig Lewisohn is likewise repelled by the novels—"cathedrals of frosted glass" he calls them; in his opinion only the shorter narratives are worth reading.[1] In his "Main Currents" Parrington gives two pages to James as against eleven to James Branch Cabell, and he has the further temerity (and/or innocence) to round out his two pages by comparing James—much to his disadvantage, of course—to Sherwood Anderson. And Van Wyck Brooks does all he can, in "New England: Indian Summer," to promote once more the notoriously low estimate of the later James to which he committed himself in "The Pilgrimage." Brooks may well believe that the Jamesian attachment is to be counted among the fixed ideas of our native "coterie-writers"—and plainly the best cure for a fixed idea is to stamp on it.

This depreciation of James is prepared for by some of the leading assumptions of our culture. The attitude of Parrington, for example, is formed by the Populist spirit of

[1] But Lewisohn, who exhibits this truncated taste for James in "Expression in America," is neither a nationalist nor a sociological critic.

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the West and its open-air poetics, whereas that of Brooks is at bottom formed by the moralism of New England—a moralism to which he has reverted, even though in practice he applies it in a more or less impressionistic and sentimental manner, with all the vehemence of a penitent atoning for his backsliding in the past. And the difference between such typical attitudes is mainly this: that while Parrington—like Whitman and Mark Twain before him—rejects James entirely, Brooks at least recognizes the value and fidelity to life of his earlier novels. Yet if James can be named, in T. S. Eliot's phrase, "a positive continuator of the New England genius," then surely Brooks must be aware of it as well as any of us: for he is nothing if not a pious servitor of this genius; after all, he, too, is a paleface. But still he scoffs at the more complex and, so to speak, ultimate James. And this Brooks does essentially for the same reasons, I think, that the Boston public of the 1870's scoffed at the works he now admits into his canon. We know that when the first of James's books appeared in America, they were actively disliked in Boston: Mrs. Fields (the wife of the publisher) relates that they were thought "self-conscious, artificial and shallow." A like animus is now be-

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trayed in Brooks's judgment of such novels as "The Spoils of Poynton," "The Wings of the Dove" and "The Golden Bowl":

> Magnificent pretensions, petty performances!—the fruits of an irresponsible imagination, of a deranged sense of values, of a mind working in a void, uncorrected by any clear consciousness of human cause and effect ("The Pilgrimage of Henry James").
>
> There was scarcely enough substance in these great ghosts of novels. . . . What concerned him now was form, almost regardless of content, the problems of calculation and construction. . . . His American characters might be nobler, but, if the old world was corrupt, its glamor outweighed its corruption in his mind . . . so that he later pictured people, actually base, as eminent, noble and great ("New England: Indian Summer").

What are such extreme statements if not critical rationalizations of the original Boston prejudice? Brooks begins by magnifying the distinctions between James's early and late manner into an absolute contradiction, and ends by invoking the charge of degeneracy. But the fact is that the changes in James's work mark no such gap as Brooks supposes but are altogether implicit in the quality of his vision, flowing from the combined release and elaboration of his basic tendency. Moreover, these changes, far from justifying the charge of degeneracy, define for a good many of his readers the one salient example in our literature of a novelist who, not exhausted by his initial assertion of power, learned how to nourish his gifts and grow to full maturity. To me he is the only really fine American writer of the nineteenth century who can truly be said to have mastered that "principle of growth," to the failure of which in our creative life Brooks has himself repeatedly called attention in his earlier preachments.

For what is to be admired in a late narrative like "The Wings of the Dove" is James's capacity to lift the nuclear theme of his first period—the theme of the American innocent's penetration into the "rich and deep and dark" hive of Europe—to a level of conscious experience and esthetic possession not previously attained. James orders his world with consummate awareness in this narrative, applying successfully his favorite rule of an "exquisite economy" in composition. There are brilliant scenes in it of London and Venice, and strongly contrasted symbols of social glamor and decay; it is invigorated, too, by an unflagging realism in the plotting of act and motive and by the large movement of the characters. No literary standpoint that allows for the dismissal of this creation as a "petty performance" can possibly be valid. Is its heroine, Milly Theale, a character without reality? She remains in our mind, writes Edmund Wilson, "as a personality independent of the novel, the kind of personality, deeply felt, invested with poetic beauty and unmistakably individualized, which only the creators of the first rank can give life to."

James suffers from a certain one-sidedness, to be sure. This tends to throw off balance such readers as are unable to see it for what it is—the price he paid, given the circumstances of his career, for being faithful to his own genius. For James could continue to develop and sustain his "appeal to a high refinement and a handsome wholeness of effect" only through intensively exploiting his very limitations, through submitting himself to a process of creative yet cruel self-exaggeration. The strain shows in the stylization of his language, a stylization so rich that it turns into an intellectual quality of rare value, but which at times is apt to become overwrought and drop into unconscious parody. It is further shown in his obsessive refinement—a veritable delirium of refinement—which again serves at times to remove us from the actuality of the represented experience. This should be related to his all-too-persistent attempts, as Yvor Winters has observed, to make the sheer *tone* of speech and behavior "carry vastly more significance than is proper to it." It is true that, for instance, in novels like "The Sense of the Past" and "The Awkward Age," he pushes his feelings for nuances and discriminations to an unworkable extreme. But such distortions, inflated into awful vices by his detractors, are of the kind which in one form or another not only James but most of the considerable modern artists are forced to cultivate as a means of coping with the negative environment that confines them. To regard such distortions as the traits of a willful coterie is utterly naïve. They are the traits, rather, of an art which, if it is to survive at all in a society inimical to all interests that are pure, gratuitous and without cash-value, has no other recourse save constantly to "refine its singularities" and expose itself more and more to the ravages of an unmitigated individualism.

But in all this I do not mean to imply that I agree with those enthusiasts who see no moral defects whatsoever in James. From the viewpoint of social criticism, there is a good deal of justice in Ferner Nuhn's mordant analysis of "The Golden Bowl."[1] Nuhn shows up one such defect in James's close identification with Adam and Maggie Verver's upper-class American illusions and self-righteousness. (One is persuaded of this view by the evidence of the tone and the inner manipulation of the scale of value, for here too the author makes the story "tell itself.") Nuhn fails to bring out, however, the enormous assets with which this novel is otherwise endowed. There is a use of symbols in it and a scenic and dramatic power scarcely equaled, to my mind, anywhere in American prose. Furthermore, whatever one may think of the millionaire self-indulgence of the Ververs, this is a far cry from the charge that his long exile put James into such a bad state that he could no longer distinguish between the noble and the base. This sort of charge is answered once and for all, it seems to me, by Stephen Spender in his study, "The Destructive Element":

> The morality of the heroes and heroines [in the last great novels] is to "suffer generously." What they have to suffer from is being more intelligent than the other characters. Also, there are no villains. It is important to emphasize this, because in these really savage novels the behavior of some of the characters is exposed in its most brutal form. But the wickedness of the characters lies primarily in their situation. Once the situation is provided, the actors cannot act otherwise. Their only compensation is that by the use of their intelligence, by their ability to understand, to love and to suffer, they may to some extent atone for the evil which is simply the evil of the modern world.

As against the sundry moralizers and nationalists who belittle James, there are the cultists who go to the other extreme in presenting him as a kind of culture-hero, an ideal master whose perfection of form is equaled by his moral

[1] In his recent book, "The Wind Blows from the East."

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insight and stanch allegiance to "tradition." This image is no doubt of consolatory value to some high-minded literary men. It contributes, however, to the misunderstanding of James, in that it is so impeccable, one might say transcendent, that it all but eliminates the contradictions in him—and in modern literature, which bristles with anxieties and ideas of isolation, it is above all the creativity, the depth and quality of the contradictions that a writer unites within himself, that gives us the truest measure of his achievement. And this is not primarily a matter of the solutions, if any, provided by the writer—for it is hardly the writer's business to stand in for the scientist or philosopher—but of his force and integrity in reproducing these contradictions as felt experience. Very few of us would be able to appreciate Dostoevsky, for instance, if we first had to accept his answer to the problem of the Christian man, or Proust if we first had to accept his answer to the problem of the artist. We appreciate these novelists because they employ imaginative means that convince us of the reality of their problems, which are not *necessarily* ours.

T. S. Eliot was surely right in saying that the soil of James's origin imparted a "flavor" that was "precisely improved and given its chance, not worked off" by his living in Europe. Now James differs radically in his contradictions from European novelists—that is why readers lacking a background in American or at least Anglo-Saxon culture make so little of him. And the chief contradiction is that his work represents a positive and ardent search for "experience" and simultaneously a withdrawal from it, or rather, a dread of approaching it in its natural state. Breaking sharply with the then still dominant American morality of abstention, he pictures "experience" as the "real taste of life," as a longed-for "presence" at once "vast, vague, and dazzling—an irradiation of light from objects undefined, mixed with the atmosphere of Paris and Venice." Nevertheless, to prove truly acceptable, it must first be Americanized as it were, that is to say, penetrated by the new-world conscience and cleansed of its taint of "evil." This tension between the impulse to plunge into "experience" and the impulse to renounce it is the chief source of the internal yet astonishingly abundant Jamesian emotion; and because the tension is not always adequately resolved, we sometimes get that effect, so well described by Glenway Wescott, of "embarrassed passion and hinted meaning in excess of the narrated facts; the psychic content is too great for its container of elegantly forged happenings; it all overflows and slops about and is magnificently wasted." On this side of James we touch upon his relationship to Hawthorne, whose characters, likewise tempted by "experience," are held back by the fear of sin. And Hawthorne's ancestral idea of sin survives in James, though in a secularized form. It has entered the sensibility and been translated into a revulsion, an exasperated feeling, almost morbid in its sensitiveness, against any conceivable crudity of scene or crudity of conduct. (The trouble with American life, he wrote, is not that it is "ugly"—the ugly can be strange and grotesque—but that it is "plain"; "even nature, in the western world, has the peculiarity of seeming rather crude and immature.") Any failure of discrimination is sin, whereas virtue is a compound of intelligence, moral delicacy and the sense of the past.

And Hawthorne's remembrance of the religious mythology of New England and his fanciful concern with it is

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replaced in James—and this too is a kind of transmutation —by the remembrance and fanciful concern with history. It was for the sake of Europe's historical "opulence" that he left his native land. Yet this idea is also managed by him in a contradictory fashion, and for this reason W. C. Brownell was able to say that he showed no real interest in the "course of history." Now as a critic Brownell had no eye for James's historical picture of the American experience in Europe; but it is true that on the whole James's sense of history is restricted by the point of view of the "passionate pilgrim" who comes to rest in the shade of civilization. Above all, he comes to enrich his personality. Thus there is produced the Jamesian conception of history as a static yet irreproachable standard, a beautiful display, a treasured background, whose function is at once to adorn and lend perspective to his well nigh metaphysical probing of personal relations, of the private life. There never was a writer so immersed in personal relations, and his consistency in this respect implies an anti-historical attitude. This helps to explain the peculiarities of his consciousness, which is intellectual yet at the same time indifferent to general ideas, deeply comprehensive yet unattached to any open philosophical motive.

These contradictions in James—and there are others besides those I have mentioned—are chiefly to be accounted for in terms of his situation as an American writer who experienced his nationality and the social class to which he belonged at once as an ordeal and as an inspiration. His characteristic themes all express this doubleness. The "great world" is corrupt, yet it represents an irresistible goal. Innocence points to all the wanted things one has been deprived of, yet it is profound in its good faith and not to be tampered with without loss. History and culture are the supreme ideal, but why not make of them a strictly private possession? Europe is romance and reality and civilization, but the spirit resides in America. James never faltered in the maze of these contraries; he knew how to take hold of them creatively and weave them into the web of his art. And the secret of their combination is the secret of his irony and of his humor.

PHILIP RAHV

For a New World[1]

FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, some specious and some sound, William James has been identified throughout the world as *the* American philosopher, though surprise has been expressed that so busily mechanical a world should have a philosopher at all. Not only his virtues but his limitations have been regarded as typically American.

Now that we in the Western Hemisphere are here celebrating the hundredth anniversery of the birth of one of the few philosophical geniuses—perhaps the only one—the United States has produced, it is appropriate that we should reëxamine the quality of that genius and see what in it was original to William James himself and what it owed to the American environment and the American tradition of which he was so vivid and so generous an expression, and to that European culture in which as a young man he had for many years lived.

A great man in any tradition is simply his heritage written large but with an accent and his own signature. William James was unmistakably himself yet equally unmistakably American; though richly based in the European past, he was the philosopher of and for a new world.

What was it, in the first place, that foreign observers have found so peculiarly American in William James? It was, perhaps, the least philosophical things about him (for foreigners do not generally regard America as a nation of philosophers), and even the philosophical aspects of William James were not those commonly found in more traditional thinkers. James did not write like a professional philosopher. He avoided the jargon of the school and he avoided the system-making of the academies. One of his former pupils, George Santayana, said of him that he made raids on philosophy. As for his language, part of James's fascination and part of his charm are the very things that for a long time have made his professional colleagues suspicious of him. He wrote racily, breezily, picturesquely. He was not above using slang. His illustrations were drawn from the conversation of men in the streets and in the family rather than from the academic clichés of books and lectures. As somebody remarked of him, he did not sound like a book, except like one of his own.

One needs to be reminded in the first place that James came to philosophy itself by a circuitous path. He began his studies with medicine. He once intended to be a doctor, and to the end he regarded philosophy no less than religion as being a form of healing for human beings. Two interests drove him to philosophy during the years of his early youth, when he went to Germany to study. One was an absorption in the then rising study of physiological psychology, and he retained throughout his life a sense that the physicist and psychologist had access to the basic and material facts on which philosophy must build. The other interest, reflected in his youthful letters to friends in America, was a passionate, personal concern with ultimate questions, with first and last things. Both interests were merged eventually in his great "Principles of Psychology," which is at once a work of scientific analysis, much of it fresh today after fifty years, and an enterprise in moral philosophy. It explores at once the basic principles of human behavior and especially the part which habits play in influencing ultimate hopes and fears. It is a panorama of the perennial aspects of human nature and the fortunes and perspectives of human nature in the natural world.

It was his concern with first and last things that was James's growing interest, and though he came back from Europe to study and teach physiology and psychology, he very soon became a professor of philosophy at Harvard and remained for a generation the most influential voice in American philosophy. As a philosopher he remained impressed with several kinds of facts that thinkers in the rationalistic tradition had on the whole ignored. The first of these was the fact of immediacy, the second, the fact of

[1] These are excerpts from a lecture given at a celebration of William James's centenary in January, 1942, at the National University of Mexico. The article was first published in Filosofia y Letras, a journal published in Mexico City, which has wide circulation in Latin America.

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movement and change. Like Hume, like Locke, like Berkeley, James wished to keep his mind on the immediately given facts. All abstractions seemed to him secondary. The cutting edge of actual human experience was what he felt it the obligation of philosophy to express, and he thought the validity of philosophies should be measured by it. He was aware, like Hume before him, that discourse is always diverse from the facts it presumably is intended to express. All abstract systems are falsifications. They are the fruit of what Wordsworth long ago called the false power by which we multiply distinctions.

To James's mind philosophers had been primarily engaged in discussing abstractions and in knitting abstractions into a pattern, beautifully consistent in itself but having its origins in no human experience and no possible verification there. Most philosophy was for James a non-Euclidean geometry of the speculative fancy. Like positivists of the mid-nineteenth century, James wished to make philosophy a formulation of actual facts. Like the romantic poets, he interpreted those facts in terms of their impingement on human senses and on human feelings. It is hard to say whether James was more swayed by his training as a physiologist or by his imagination as a painter and poet. But it remains a fact that he tried to find a language and a philosophy that should express first and foremost the living immediacies of the moments as they passed, with their background of memory and, above all, of hope, of fear, of expectation. It is not remarkable that he could write to Bergson with characteristic enthusiasm when he first read "Creative Evolution": "Oh my Bergson you are a miracle," or that Bergson so highly valued James's thought. For Bergson, too, distrusted abstractions, and sought to find a philosophy that should express the immediate, and to express further what James, too, sought to express—the inalienable quality of immediacy itself, in constant flux.

William James wished to begin afresh, although he could not, any more than any other thinker, begin altogether anew, and he borrowed his conceptions of experience from the British empiricists and, almost unconsciously, his moral ideal from Kant. But he did try to start afresh. He tried to begin where he thought human beings themselves began, in the characteristic predicaments of a perplexed animal in a constantly changing world, a world with a real future, one in which change was not only going on but in which the very direction of change was indeterminate.

To James there was another characteristic of change that human beings whose experience was undistorted by falsifying systems would recognize, and that, in point of fact, they always assumed in action. Existence was not one river of change; it was rather a river in which there were many currents or eddies. Reality was not change, but changes. The universe was not one but a pluriverse (James's own word), of many processes and many changes. Philosophers in the past had not only made the mistake, according to James, of stressing the permanent; they had been hypnotized by the ideal of coherence. They had compressed all the multiplicity of things into a single system, one that could be put into a mathematical demonstration or neatly expounded on a blackboard in a classroom. It may be stated in passing that James thought one of the great sources of illusion in philosophy came from the fact that it was chiefly expounded by professors who could not see beyond the

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windows of their classrooms. Existence as human beings experienced it, and that was the only existence James thought it fruitful to discuss, was not a tight single system; it was a multiplicity of changes, of endless processes. Ideas were tentative and exploratory hypotheses rising out of the interaction of those changes in which human beings were challenged.

It is here, perhaps, in William James's conception of the relation of ideas to a changing universe that the key to the understanding of his philosophy is to be found. Ideas were not finished copies of a static reality. They are, for James, guesses; what in American slang we call "hunches"; they are plans for action and, like all plans, they are risks. Ideas are not true or false because they fit into a tight system of coherence, or because they are pictures in our heads of a finished and eternal reality outside our heads. They are themes for our guidance, charts of navigation, tentative instruments or methods for dealing with the as yet unfinished future. The truth or falsity of ideas lay not in their accuracy as copies or their neatness in fitting in to a logic-tight system There was for James no such thing as *the* Truth, finished, final and complete. There could be no such final truth, for the universe is unfinished. There could be no one truth, for the universe is many processes. There could be no meaning to truth save in verification. What is true is what works, as James puts it. The doctrine, thus baldly stated, lends itself to the most damaging and even sinister interpretation.

Some time ago Mussolini announced in an article on schism in the "Ciclopedia Italiana" that he had derived his ideas of power politics from William James. That liberal-minded and generous-hearted philosopher must have turned in his grave. Nothing could have been more hateful to James than the notion that by truth he meant whatever one could achieve by irresponsible brute power. He meant by truth that which worked in the broadest human context, what contributed to the widest human welfare as judged by the most generous perspectives of action.

The doctrine of truth in terms of consequence, it is true, led to ambiguities and problems which James never succeeded in solving, or sometimes even recognizing. At times he sounded as if he made truths as he went along, or as if, somehow, he meant consequences in a short view, in the narrowest situation, irrespective of these larger contexts and comprehensive relations which we call the nature of things. In the same way, good for James was not simply what worked in the private interests of a single person but what worked in the wide interests of the whole group. James once called pragmatism a new name for some old ways of thinking, and one of the ways of thinking very familiar to him, and not unsympathetic, was Utilitarianism. With Mill he came very near defining the good as the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and with Socrates long before him, the good with the useful.

Much attention has been paid to James's theory of truth and to its ambiguities. In the storm of technical controversy we are likely to forget what lay behind James's conception of truth. He was not primarily interested in the problem of knowledge, much as he wrote about it in scattered papers. He was concerned in the broad sense with the human uses of knowledge, and much more important in his philosophy than in his technical discussions of the meaning of truth is his insistence on the moral or human uses of ideas. Humanly speaking, then, ideas in practice functioned as true or false in so far as they facilitated or impeded human conduct. Truth or falsity was a function not of existence but of ideas, and ideas were intellectual adventures, moral risks, proposals for action. Ideas were not only true or false; they were good or bad in terms of what effect they had upon human beings.

For James, then, a philosophical or religious belief was simply an idea on a wide scale and one with consequences. It made an enormous difference to human beings by what metaphysical or theological belief they lived. Some philosophies, like those of materialism, mechanism and rationalism, seemed to James to paralyze human action, to freeze human hopes. A belief in the ultimate but gradual triumph of good, a belief in a providence with whom men's most generous hopes and devoted actions are allied, such a belief liberated the energies of men, lighted their future, eased their burden or helped them to get along the road with it. Life was constantly passing alternatives or options to us, real options, James thought, "live" options rather than dead ones. It was important, it was necessary to make choices. A view of life that closed the future was a bad view; one that furthered men in the risky enterprise of living was a good view. All ideas were problematic; they were unverified hypotheses. Scientists verified their hypotheses in the laboratory; men verified their beliefs in their daily conduct.

My country has truthfully enough been accused of short-sighted practicality and of mechanical materialism. But there is a deeper strain in American thought and feeling which appears, and finds its noblest expression in, Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman. It is this strain which James comes back to again and again. It is what will live long after controversies about the logic of his theory of truth are forgotten. That theme is the theme of the individual, sacred and unique, in whom a godhead speaks, of the individual in whose profound moral compulsions lies the significance of life. In the long run James measured government institutions and philosophies by what they contributed to emancipating this lonely spark of divinity in each man. It is what made him, like Emerson, a critic, often unsparing, of the rush, the tumult, the organized bigness of American life. It is what made him a bitter anti-imperialist and a sharp critic of American policy in the Spanish-American War. It is what unites with him all men in the Western world or in the world anywhere, who look on philosophy as not only a way of thought but a way of life, and a faith, unverifiable but inescapable, by which they may be saved from emptiness and despair.

There is another sense in which James could not have written or thought as he did save in America in the late nineteenth century. James inherited that transcendental faith in the common man, and that faith in cultivated leadership, which animated the whole group of writers who lived in and near Concord. He was close to Emerson, to the faith that, given sufficient freedom from overorganization and from the formulas of system, each man in a democratic society might come to his full stature. Like his own father, like Thoreau, like Emerson and like Whitman, he thought each man best expressed the best in all men by

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being incorrigibly himself. And when one was one's self, thought for one's self, when one followed the compulsions of one's own being, one expressed the essential humanity, the divine vocation of all men.

Like many other reflective Americans in the late nineteenth century, William James eyed with fear the gradual mastery of men by things and by mechanisms, the substitution of mass movements for individuality, the drowning of distinction native to each man in his own character, by the mediocrity of herds, of groups, of organizations. The passion for bigness, the passion for administration, the obsessions with machinery physical and social, were growing in America. James remained to the end of his life the champion of the individual and individuality in action and in thought. He was one of the voices in America dead set against stereotypes, against mass production in human relations. One of the reasons he fought against too great a system in philosophy was because, like too much organization in government, it quenched the living fire of individuality. He was anti-totalitarian long before the word was known. One of the reasons he sometimes was taken in by fools and pretenders was that he thought he might be missing a genius.

There was still another sense in which William James was of the New World and of a new world. In some ways he was the most European of Americans, for he had spent his boyhood abroad, living familiarly at school in France and Switzerland. He spoke French and German and used them intellectually with ease; one of his papers, read at an International Congress in Rome, appears in his collected writings in French. But unlike his novelist brother Henry James, who eventually became a British subject, William James breathed more freely, felt more free, whenever he returned to the United States from many long visits abroad. Like Emerson, like Whitman, he saw an immense spiritual hope in the vast new continent, and a new birth of freedom possible for the human spirit here, as it then seemed removed from the clashes and difficulties of the Old World. James was an American in more senses than that he was brought up in the United States, and that his culture was that of a New Englander. He had a very vivid sense of being on a new continent, a world with a new hope. And on that continent, he expressed with a new accent a morality and a point of view that turned out to be much more European and traditional than in some ways he realized. For what was the moral faith which he preached as both an opportunity and a necessity but the practical reasoning of Kant, whom in many periods of his life he had assiduously studied? And when he began, as he did, to interpret faith in the future, enlistment in the moral transformation of the world, the regarding each man as an end in himself, when he began to interpret these things as duties, as imperatives, was he not, an American in a new world, speaking the accent of Immanuel Kant in the old?

William James holds an interesting lesson for all philosophers on this continent. The new world is not the old, and whatever we think here will be marked by the fact that it is the thought of men living on this hemisphere. But as Bacon put it, we are the ancients, for we inherit the whole past. Yet in his own rich native spirit James was enriched by the tradition of the whole past. Like Plato he regarded philosophy and religion as instruments of salvation. Though he lacked the composure of the Greeks, like them he re-

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garded philosophy not simply as a way of thought but as a way of life. Like the great saints and mystics whom he was so fond of quoting, he knew religious traditions and beliefs were, as they always have been, ways of being saved. So, too, was philosophy, which, taken earnestly, was a belief hardly distinguishable from religion in the long run. What mattered most in a man was his faith. The business of philosophy was to awaken, to liberate that faith. James had his own notions about the question of which point of view in philosophy did these things best. But he remains the great example of a philosophic mind eager to welcome any faith that was the authentic voice of a free spirit and that would light the uncertain road of men in a world of risk, of chaos and of darkness. For an authentic belief in the possible triumph of good might itself make the good triumph and flower in the world.

IRWIN EDMAN

The Altar of Henry James

THIS IS, perhaps, an unfortunate title; it does not refer, for example, to the increasing number of people who have been throwing themselves at the feet of Henry James in the last few years. At least a half-dozen full-length studies of his work are in preparation; not all of his books are easily available on the market; his reputation is higher than at any moment in his own lifetime. It is clear enough that to the present generation he means something more than to the generation of Van Wyck Brooks and Lewis Mumford or to the addled and intolerant generation of the thirties. Also clear is that what he means is something different. To say what this something is in every case is, of course, impossible. What this article undertakes is to suggest that if he makes such a great appeal to so many of us today it must be because there lies at the center of his work something that corresponds to our deepest contemporary needs and hopes. It raises the question of what was James's *own* altar—or, if one prefers, the particular object of piety to which he was able to devote himself at the end.

All this is to strike the religious note; and indeed, since we have no better word for the kind of passionate and responsible sense of human things that James possessed, he must be accounted a religious man. In this he simply followed his astonishing father, who ached out a lifetime trying to reconcile a heritage of respectability and good sense with a taste for Swedenborgian mysticism. Nor was he essentially unlike his brother William, whose too sudden plunge into the darker cellars of the personality, during the period of his breakdown, frightened him into a loud and quasi-religious philosophy of optimism. All the Jameses were religious. The important thing about Henry is that he was an artist; that is, he had to work in a concrete medium and in a more or less fixed craft which did not permit him the consolations of shaking his head over Brook Farm experiments or becoming the Socrates of the Chautauquas. It meant that he could not evade the really great questions because these questions were stubbornly imbedded in the very materials of his craft—the lived and observed human situation.

For us it means that if we are to look for what is essential in James we are not likely to find it on the surface of his writing. (This is probably what T. S. Eliot means by the remark, "James had a mind so pure that no idea could violate it.") As in any authentic artist, the "meaning" in James is contained in the total arrangement and order of his symbols, and in the novel everything—people, events and settings—are capable of being invested with symbolic value. In only a few novelists like Turgenev, Joyce and the Mann of "Death in Venice" are meaning and literal statement so indivisible; the great works of the last period, "The Ambassadors" and "The Golden Bowl," are put together, if not like a vastly exfoliated lyric, like one of the final plays of Shakespeare. And to approach them in the manner of Spurgeon or Knight on Shakespeare is almost certainly to uncover conflicts of feeling that are more often than not belied by the overt urbanity of style. It is also to raise the question of how much is conscious, how much unconscious, in any artist's work—in James's case, the often noted element of ambiguity. Is it merely an accident, for example, that in an early work like "The Portrait of a Lady" all the great climaxes in Isabel Archer's career—from her refusal of the English lord to her final flight from Caspar Goodwood—are made to occur in a garden? If an accident it was a fortunate one, for the garden-symbol provides a wonderful point of concentration for the widest possible number of associations—the recollection especially of the famous Garden in which one of Isabel's ancestresses was also confronted with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It enables us to arrive at the formula, nowhere explicit in the book, that the real trouble with Isabel is that she is someone who will have none of the bitter fruit and runs from the garden in panic. And it might lead us to an even wider formula regarding James's own attitude toward these matters at this point in his development.

For the symbolic approach to James, besides lifting the mystery of individual works, makes possible a more organic study of his whole growth and achievement than the usual chronological division of his career into three periods. If the garden-symbol began as an accident, for example, it persists with remarkable frequency; and it is submitted to a series of drastic modifications. In "The Portrait of a Lady" it is clearly ambivalent. On the one hand, it is all that rich if uncertain promise of beautiful fulfilment that life is opening up to Isabel—wealth, marriage, Europe. On the other, it is the dwelling-place of the unknown terror that is actually in herself—the terror of experience which at the end she rationalizes in terms of moral obligation. If the novel ends with such manifest ambiguity it is because James himself has not yet resolved certain issues in his mind and temperament. In the novels and tales of the nineties, the so-called "middle period," the symbol is first split wide asunder into its two aspects, then one of them is made to dominate. When the governess in "The Turn of the Screw" begins her afternoon walk in the garden everything is calm and radiant and peaceful. It is with the force of a shock, she tells us, that it suddenly becomes transformed for her into a scene of desolation and death. Once again we know that this is a case of projection; the garden is all that alarming and unsuspected side of her nature which she cannot accept because she believes it to be evil.

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Nor do we feel that James accepts it; evil, working in the guise of zeal, is triumphant; and the story adds up to another terrifying treatment of the Othello-motif, the infinite amount of mischief done in the world, in the name of goodness, by self-blinded innocence. Even more terrifying perhaps in its nightmarish cancellation of all normal motives is "The Other House," in which nearly all the action occurs in a garden. James did not include this in the New York edition; it is the one altogether evil book that he ever wrote. But it sounds the depths of what must have been in his life a period of the most torturous metaphysical panic and moral despair. Without such a sojourn in the abyss as it represents he would never have attained to the full-bodied affirmation of the last and greatest period. Like Strether, in "The Ambassadors," he wins through, by a long and difficult "process of vision," to an acceptance of human life as it is lived—qualified, of course, by a revalidation of the naïvely grasped moral certitudes of his youth. It is in Gloriani's garden that Strether makes the celebrated speech with the refrain, "Live, live while you can!" But life now is to be lived always with the wary knowledge of the shadows lurking ever in the dark corners of the garden.

To point out that the full import of James is to be derived only from some such weighing of his major symbols is not to deny that throughout his work he does let drop explicit judgments and opinions on important matters, although never like Tolstoy or Proust to the temporary abnegation of his role. It so happens that in one of the final stories of the middle period—not one of the best known or most admired—he has given us what may be taken as something like a testament of belief. "The Altar of the Dead" is unique in the James canon, fluttering on the edge of a morbid emotionalism and sustained only by a marvelous tonality of style. It is also a masterpiece of its kind in English—the long short story or *novella*. But for our purpose it is significant because it is the only one of James's works in which a character is made to come face to face with the problem of religion.

Its hero, one of those sensitive middle-aged gentlemen whom James apologizes for writing about in the nineties, shocked by the callousness of a friend who remarries too soon after his first wife's death, dedicates himself to keeping up the memory of his dead friends. "What came to pass was that an altar, such as was after all within everybody's compass, lighted with perpetual candles and dedicated to these secret rites, reared itself in his spiritual spaces. He had wondered of old, in some embarrassment, whether he had a religion; being very sure, and not a little content, that he hadn't at all events the religion some of the people he had known wanted him to have. Gradually this question was straightened out for him—it became clear to him that the religion instilled by his earliest consciousness had been simply the religion of the Dead." Difficulties begin when quite by accident he enters a church and is tempted to light real candles before the real altar of a religion in which he does not believe. For he soon acquires a companion in mourning—a woman given to the same rites for a dead friend. In time it turns out that this friend, who had actually been her ruin, is also the one man among his friends whom the hero cannot commemorate because of some betrayal in the past. This coincidence threatens their relationship; they can no longer pay tribute at the same altar. A resolution is managed only when the hero realizes

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that the true "religion of the Dead" requires that we remember even our enemies—just because they were once part of ourselves and helped make us what we are.

What does James intend by this strange and tenuous parable, which he himself refers to as a "conceit"? It is, as he tells us in a preface, an instance of the "exasperated piety" of the Londoner of his time: "an instance of some such practised communion was a foredoomed consequence of life, year after year, amid the densest and most materialized aggregation of men on earth, the society most wedded by all its conditions to the immediate and finite." It is a commentary on the pathetic desolation of the individual in our society—a desolation shared by both the living and the dead. Toward the dead it expresses the same kind of sympathy that we find in Baudelaire's

Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,
Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,
Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres,
Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

And in its emphasis on the still potent influence that the dead can exercise on the living it recalls Joyce's fine story, "The Dead." As to the living, or the living-dead, it explains their desolation as the absence of any ritual by which some principle of continuity in human experience may be recognized and observed. For it is continuity that is represented as the basis of everything—of personality, friendship, morality and civilization itself. Without some sense of it the individual is no more than a moment in time and a speck in space; he has nothing by means of which he can define his own identity.

What James tells us, finally, is that we exist only by virtue of the existence of others, living and dead, with whom we have ever had relations. The individual, in the language of modern physics, is only an "event," to be defined in terms of a given field of forces. These relations or forces bring with them certain obligations, and the greatest of these is the formal act of commemoration. It is not morbidity that prompts James to write: "The sense of the state of the dead is but part of the sense of the state of the living; and, congruously with that, life is cheated to almost the same degree of the finest homage (precisely this our possible friendships and intimacies) that we fain would render it." We pay respect to the dead because they enhance the state of the living, and the dead is of course a metaphor for the whole tradition of civilized humanity of which we are a part and in terms of which we must ultimately be measured. This sense of the continuum between past and present, between all who share the memory of a common experience, is now known to be at the base of every religion in the world. For James it is a very real religion, although wholly without any theological cast. Or, if we prefer, he emerges as one of our great humanists, the greatest perhaps, because his humanism was grounded in such a rich tragic experience. And, in that case, his altar—what would it be but the sometimes splendid and exultant, sometimes mangled and ignoble, body of humanity stretched out in imagination in time and space? At a moment when loss of continuity is our gravest threat, when personality is everywhere at a discount, when all consequent values dissolve in the general terror, it is probably no great wonder that more and more people are turning to Henry James.

WILLIAM TROY

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